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The Nonconformist.

THE DISSIDENCE OF DISSENT AND THE PROTESTANTISM OF THE PROTESTANT RELIGION.

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Ecclesiastical Affairs.

THE LATE CONFERENCE.

With the leave of our readers we will indulge in two or three further observations on the recent Conference of the Liberation Society. The course taken by the deliberations of that body suggests more than one topic worthy of fuller consideration than we were able to give them last week. The Conference, it should be borne in mind, was a representative assembly, including members holding widely different opinions in regard to theological truth. A large majority of them, no doubt, were under the influence of motives chiefly derived from the vivid sympathy they have with a Christian teaching, and from their conviction that such teaching will be purer, nobler, and more practically successful, when it ceases to be associated with civil law and State arrangements for its support. There were, however, some present who look upon the object of the movement almost exclusively on its political side; who do not profess to be interested in the spiritual results which may flow from its realisation; but who see in the Established Churches organisations which, in their very nature, lend to the limitation of freedom of thought and profession, and which, in their actual working, invariably obstruct the healthful progress of political reform.

Theoretically, the basis of the Liberation Society has never prevented the co-operation of the two parties; practically, its work has been mainly, perhaps too exclusively, carried on by the first. It was never sectarian in its aims; although, partly from the exigencies of the case, and from the temper of the times, it might be considered sectarian in the machinery which it resorted to. There can be no doubt that its political power was considerably narrowed by this fact. A very large proportion of those who possess the franchise look upon the contest as one mainly interesting to the relative position of religious denominations—so much so, that the zeal and activity of the friends of the movement have been disregarded, if not denounced, by a large section of the constituent bodies as due only to intolerance and bigotry. Something, we trust, has been done to clear away this unjust reproach. The ends of the Society, and the spirit in which it is disposed to pursue them, are beginning to be better understood. No member of it will be obliged to forego, to the smallest extent, his religious convictions, or the estimate he may have formed of their paramount importance. But the agitation which aims at a great national advantage will be likely henceforth to assume a more distinctly national character, and the manner in which it approaches different classes of Her Majesty's subjects will, there is reason to hope, be better adapted to win the assent and secure the cordial co-operation of all who, whether on religious or political grounds, object to a great legalised ecclesiastical monopoly.

Another feature of last week's Conference strikes us as immensely important. We allude to the final escape of the movement from party entanglements. It has happily come to pass by a natural process, and without any formal disruption. Of the past we are not disposed to speak censoriously. The staunchest supporters of religious equality will repudiate all idea of a quarrel between themselves and the less advanced section of the Liberal party. They have been separated the one from the other by circumstances which they could not overrule. For the present, the Liberal party, as a whole, is without any enunciated policy. The partisans of religious equality are left free to pursue their own ends. They propose to throw into their movement all the energy of which it is capable, to adopt it and prosecute it as their policy, quite irrespectively of the possible desires of such as may fail to keep abreast of it. The positive will have to draw after it the negative. The wing in advance will no longer be impeded by the dilatory marching of the body behind it. Henceforth the reconstitution of the Liberal party will be dependent upon the acceptance by the whole body of religious equality as one of its guiding principles. This will greatly simplify our political action. We are under no necessity of casting off any political allies. Their future union with us will depend upon their own decision. For the present, and perhaps for some time to come, both sections of the party will be comparatively powerless in Parliament. But the chances of reunion will rest, not upon the going back of the advanced section, but upon the going forward of that which is behind. The former can wait, and bide its time without loss of complacency; the latter may do so too if it please. Meanwhile the former will be actively and incessantly engaged in enforcing its policy upon the constituent bodies, and in creating and enlarging a public opinion which, in the course few years, will shape the Liberalism of the nation in accordance with its own ideas and sympathies. There can be no Liberal party hereafter in the ascendant the programme of which does not include disestablishment and disendowment as one of the principal items of its profession.

And this brings us to a third observation. The subject of disendowment was wisely broached at the Conference as one requiring careful attention. The time has come for fixing all the details—at least of settling all the main principles—which should characterise the process of disendowment. Those principles we believe to be quite capable of being adjusted to the most stringent claims of equity, without danger of reconstructing an ecclesiastical corporation dangerous to the supremacy of the State. We have again and again set forth in these columns the views we entertain in regard to this matter, but it will be necessary to set them forth with something like authority, and to this the Executive Committee of the Liberation Society should earnestly address itself at as early a period as possible. The task is one which will tax its practical sagacity to the utmost; one for the performance of which, in a manner worthy of it, the fullest and minutest information will be indispensable, and the largest legislative resource. For our own part, we should be glad to see the draft of a bill purporting to embody all needful provisions for the disestablishment and disendowment of the two Established Churches. To some such definite presentation of its object the society must make up its mind to come, before it can fairly take hold of the sympathies of the nation. The main question, after all, with which Parliament will have to deal—although it may not be the main reason which will move the nation—is the question of Church Property. We shall have to ascertain, as far as can be ascertained by unofficial research, its probable amount, the sources from which it has been derived, the legal tenure by which it is held, and the equitable considerations, which should govern its redistribution. There is, consequently, no fear whatever that the Liberation Society will not have enough to do; and, indeed, a fair proportion of the magnificent fund which it has resolved to raise, will be usefully employed in availing itself of all the knowledge, skill, and wisdom that can be obtained in constructing and in commending to the public mind a complete practical scheme of disendowment.

THE SECOND READING OF THE ARCHBISHOPS' BILL.

The debate in the House of Lords on the second reading of the Public Worship Regulation Bill was undoubtedly distinguished by earnestness of purpose, and by very considerable intellectual force. Indeed, in the absence of Mr. Gladstone, it must in all candour be allowed that the palm of oratory, which has for some time past been very evenly disputed by the two branches of our Legislature, is likely to be appropriated altogether by the patrician House. The two archbishops, the Bishop of Peterborough, the Earl of Shaftesbury, and the Marquis of Salisbury, each of them delivered speeches which, while exhibiting very various qualities of plausibility, vigour, common sense, and statecraft, were all well worthy of a place in the records of English Parliamentary eloquence. In these days, when the relief of bishops from their political functions is regarded as a foregone conclusion, and when even some revolutionary reformation of the House of Peers has been supposed to be amongst the answers to the question, "What next, and next?" we can easily understand how to a superficial observer such a debate as that of Monday night may appear to be a significant sign of a reaction, not only in public opinion, but in the conditions that affect its formation. Still further, the spectacle of grave ecclesiastical reforms initiated in the Imperial Parliament by the Episcopal Bench, with a frank acknowledgment of the difficulties to be encountered, yet with a firm confidence in the possibility of carrying these reforms into law and practice, is a sight which ten years ago no one could have anticipated, and which might seem to promise to an almost expiring Establishment a new and surprising lease of life. Yet notwithstanding the plausibility of such impressions, we do not feel in the least degree shaken in the opinion we have already announced, that there are only two alternatives before us. Either the proposed legislation will come to nothing, or it will prove to be the first act in the Parliamentary drama of disestablishment.

Of course it is possible so to amend the

bill that its own promoters would not know it, and its most deadly foes could make no objection to its existence. This is the course suggested by the Lower House of Convocation, and apparently assented to by the ominous unanimity with which the House of Lords seemed to agree that the second reading should mean nothing more than a determination that "something should be done." The speech of Lord Shaftesbury is from this point of view most remarkable. Representing as he notoriously does all that is left of the once powerful Evangelical sect in the Anglican Church—a sect which, though sadly demoralised, is after all not entirely dead—he might naturally have been expected eagerly to welcome a measure avowedly aimed at the Romanising party that he abhors. Yet though the noble lord has been unsparing of his reproaches against the bishops for their inactivity, no sooner are they stirred up to unwonted zeal than he becomes aware of dangers on which he had not calculated. And with the exception of the parrot cry that "something must be done," the whole of his speech was devoted to a denunciation of that particular "something" which the bishops proposed to do. He objected to the constitution of the new courts. He ridiculed the idea of a bishop sending a case for trial to his own diocesan court, to be presided over by himself. "This," said the noble earl, "would be much the same as if the foreman of a grand jury were also the chairman of Quarter Sessions." He urged—and on this point the Bishop of Peterborough practically agreed with him—that it would be monstrous to put the bishops into a position in which consistency would require them to enforce all the rubrics equally on all parties. He deprecated the compulsory reading of the Athanasian Creed: although such reading is now actually required by the law of the land. He inveighed against the "discretion" allowed to bishops in regard to every case that may be brought before them; and he gave the strongest proof of sincerity in his power by declaring that even if a monopoly of Low-Church bishops were guaranteed for the next fifty years, he would not dream of trusting them with the exercise of such powers. On the other hand, he did not believe that the new law was likely to be effective against the practices which have aroused public indignation. He denied that it would touch the confessional, nor did he think it would reach that scandal of "altar-cards" which seems to have roused the archbishops more than the confessional or anything else. Altogether the Earl of Shaftesbury seems to have a very poor opinion indeed of Dr. Tait's legislative capacity. Throughout his argument we can discern no reason for his support to the second reading, other than his conviction that "something must be done." And if, as we have no reason to doubt, the Evangelicals generally agree with him, the fate of the bill is already sealed. At any rate it will come out of the Legislative mill as little like itself as the sausages produced by a machine, of which we have heard in America, are like the live hog that walked in at the other end.

The Bishop of Peterborough, who must needs fall upon Lord Shafterbury, in recollection of former ill compliments to the Episcopal Bench, and who professed to treat many of the noble earl's objections as entirely nugatory, nevertheless said some things which went very far to support his opponent's argument. For Lord Shaftesbury had insisted that the archbishop's proposals were but a poor apology for the "wide, deep-searching Church reform" that was needed. And whether with deliberate intention or not, that view of the case was supported, with a vigour and frankness peculiarly his own, by the Bishop of Peterborough. "What is the real root of the evil?" he asked. "It is that we have governed, or rather we are attempting to govern, the Church of England by obsolete law." He said, in effect, that as the law stands, it is simply impossible to enforce it. He confessed that when his clergy consulted him about some small but absolutely necessary deflection from the rubrics, he said to them; "Do it and don't tell me of it." "That," said he, "means, that the law is so unsuitable that you can neither enforce it nor obey it." This seems a very odd sort of admission for an Episcopal legislator who is just going to vote for the second reading of a bill professedly, and even ostentatiously, designed for the better enforcement of laws already existing. The Bishop of Peterborough says it cannot be done; and yet he votes for doing it. The explanation of such paradoxical conduct is perhaps to be found partly, in the desperate desire to "do something" which has seized on the Episcopal Bench with the sudden passion of a crusade; and partly also in that discretionary power which would enable the Bishop of Peterborough still to say to his clergy desirous of deflections: "Do it, if you like," and to troublesome parishioners, "Don't tell me of it." But we venture to think the bishops, however gifted with oratorical powers, are not strong enough to hold the balance, as they propose, by their own discretion, between the tremendous forces which are gathering for the battle of the future, between Romanism on the one hand and Rationalism on the other. We are told that large measures of Church reform are needed; and bishops do not deny it. They only delay the execution of their task on the plea of insufficient power. And yet they fondly imagine themselves firm and skilful enough to put down by their own hands evils against which they dare not invoke the might of Parliament. Churchmen like Lord Shaftesbury want a strong bulwark of new law erected to keep out Romanising priests, and to protect Protestant orthodoxy. "No," say the bishops, "it is so difficult to say precisely where the lines of fortification should be drawn." We are to leave everything to them. They know precisely the right men to be protected, and the appropriate victims of legal severity. This is truly Episcopacy with a vengeance. But we more than question whether it is the Episcopacy in which the Anglican clergy believe.

THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION MEETINGS.

(From our own Correspondent.)

Only those who are acquainted with the secrets of the committee-room know the difficulties and the anxiety which have attended the arrangements for this year's meeting of the Congregational Union. They have arisen, not from the topics to be discussed, or from differences of opinion inside or outside the committee, but simply from the uncertainty which has prevailed as to the place of meeting. The great feature of the proceedings was to be the opening of the Memorial Hall in Farringdon-street, the completion of which by the 31st of last December was guaranteed by the contractor. Then the time was extended to the 26th of March; and, finally, the assurance was given that by the middle of April the work would be sufficiently completed to allow the Union to assemble in the new building. It is true that there were those who, as they watched the progress of the works, never believed in these guarantees, while it also began to be doubted that there would be room for anything like the number of delegates appointed—to say nothing of the number of visitors who would certainly seek for admission. Nevertheless, the preparations went on, and chairman's address, secretary's report, and speakers' addresses, were all framed on the supposition that the memorial erected to commemorate the heroism of the Ejected of 1662 would exercise an inspiring influence on both speakers and audience.

At length—and after the announcements had been issued—came the final, and this time, veracious announcement, made so late as the 28th ult., that the hall was still unfinished, and that the opening must, therefore, be indefinitely postponed. Of course everything had to be suddenly changed, and the committee had to adapt themselves as they best could to the new circumstances in which they were now placed. Finsbury Chapel was then fixed upon as the place of meeting, and fresh announcements were issued, but unexpected obstacles to this arrangement interposed. At length Westminster Chapel was pitched upon for the principal meeting; with a *soirée* at the Cannon-street Hotel to close the proceedings.

The business meeting of the Union was, however, held on Monday evening at the Weigh House Chapel—an edifice which, from its central position and suitable size for such purposes, has assumed a character for utility which will make metropolitan Nonconformists glad that it has escaped the destruction which threatened it. Now that it has been rearranged and tastefully decorated, it presents an appearance of elegance which strongly contrasts with the aspect of the interior of the Weigh-House in the olden time, and not a few noticed on Monday night, and with much satisfaction, the beautiful stained-glass window just put in as a memorial of Mr. Binney; the appropriate subject being Paul preaching at Athens.

The meeting was confined to representative and associate members, and was the largest of the kind yet held; so large that the audience filled the ground-floor, and the front of the galleries had to be called into requisition. It was evident that the restrictions which, it was thought by some, would injuriously affect the numbers attending have had no such effect, and that in that respect, as in others, the new constitution is working smoothly and well.

After tea in the vestry, and animated talk between the members, who, fresh from the country, seemed full of spirits, and bent on using the opportunity for friendly greetings, the proceedings commenced. The Rev. J. G. Rogers, of Clapham, the chairman of the year, took his seat; a hymn was sung, and prayer was offered by Dr. Allon.

The Chairman, in a few opening words, after expressing regret, which, he said, no one felt so keenly as himself, at their inability to meet in the new Hall, proceeded to say that he felt it to be the highest honour of his life to have been called to that chair. The fact showed that there was an absence of all party feeling in that body; for though he had at times differed from some of his brethren, when controversies had ceased the excitement of feeling which they occasioned subsided. His pleasure was increased by the fact that the first signature attached to the nomination was that of Thomas Binney, with whom, not long before, he had engaged in friendly discussion on the education question. After expressing satisfaction that he had not to preside over such a body as Convocation, but over a body which found its strength in its freedom, he expressed a hope that the proceedings of the Union about to commence would be spirited, united, practical, and devout.

Scrutineers for the election of the new committee having been appointed, the Rev. A. Hannay presented the annual report; apologizing for the truncated form in which it was submitted, in consequence of the change already referred to. It commenced with a reference to the late Rev. Thos. James, who, through two whole generations, had been a staunch Congregationalist, thoroughly versed in all the traditions of the body; besides displaying much good sense and genial feeling. An elaborate and ably drawn minute relating to Mr. Binney followed. The Conference at Birmingham on Church Finance was described, and the reference to the necessity for raising ministerial incomes and paying them punctually, and also for grouping village churches and multiplying lay preachers, was received with some significant cheers. The committee had tried to collect some important Sunday-school and college statistics, which were not yet complete; the failure of some of the ministerial, or other authorities, to supply what was asked having occasioned much disappointment. The revived Congregational Lecture, by Professor H. Rogers, is, said the report, "in your hands"; which elicited from one minister the suggestive exclamation, "I wish it were!" It was also announced that the next lecture, by Dr. Reynolds, would be ready in October, the subject being the "Ministry of John the Baptist," and the third of the series would be by Mr. Dale. The resolutions passed by the committee in regard to the bill of last session for amending the Education Act and the general election were reported—not without some laughter on the part of those who thought subsequent events had supplied an unfavourable commentary on their contents. The appointment of delegates to the Liberation Society's Conference was also reported. From the cash statement presented, it appeared that the expenses of the Union, with the increased cost of printing its publications, had prevented the accumulation of a surplus available for benevolent grants.

Mr. Grimwade, of Ipswich, moved the adoption of the report, and urged the necessity for increasing ministerial stipends; instead of members of congregations giving only what they gave forty years ago, while they were spending much more on themselves. He also advocated the weekly offering, and hoped that Mr. H. Rogers' lecture would be obtainable at half price for presentation to ministers. The motion, having been briefly seconded by the Rev. J. Radford Thomson, was at once passed. The secretaries reported that the list of committee previously nominated had been carried. A new standing order was proposed, obviating the necessity for a ballot when only one gentleman was nominated for the chair. It was also reported that the Rev. Alexander Thomson, M.A., of Manchester, had been proposed for the chairmanship next year by several influential members of the union, and he was forthwith elected; the present chairman describing him as a cultivated scholar, a devout and able minister, and a true-hearted Christian man.

Mr. Hannay's reappointment as secretary elicited several expressions of hearty approval of the ability, the judgment, and the earnestness with which he has discharged the duties of his office. Some honorary members were elected, and the Rev. J. H. Wilson having narrated the facts connected with the Memorial Hall failure, the meeting was dissolved at eight o'clock.

Whatever the country brethren thought, there were Londoners who did not at all like the necessity for travelling to Westminster, to attend the Union meetings; albeit, that the chapel was announced to be but three minutes' walk from two of the Underground Railway-stations. But "all's well that ends well," and Westminster Chapel proved to be the most comfortable place of meeting among the several buildings in which the Union has assembled. It was thought that it must prove too large for such a purpose; but no! the members were present in such numbers that the whole of that spacious area was filled, and the lower gallery was also filled with visitors. Apparently, at the rate at which the Union has grown, it will presently need to meet beneath the dome of St. Paul's; and let us hope that by the time that necessity arises there will be no legal or other difficulties in the way of such an arrangement.

It was at a little before ten when Mr. Rogers, the Chairman, commenced the delivery of an address which occupied above an hour-and-a-half; but the speaker's vigour, and the attractiveness of the topics

with which he dealt, prevented his becoming wearisome; while his voice filled the building. The subject of the address was "Nonconformity as a Spiritual Force," and, notwithstanding that it was primarily intended for delivery in the Memorial Hall, and to have relation to the events which that edifice is intended to commemorate, it was so instinct with the life of these times, and so full of allusions to current topics, that the anomalousness of the position soon ceased to be present to the mind of the hearer. Unlike some of those who celebrate the fidelity of the ejected ministers, the speaker insisted that Nonconformists would show themselves to be unworthy descendants of their ancestors if they slavishly confined themselves to admiration of the past, and were so enslaved by traditions as to become unfit for the duties of the present. The wisdom of our ancestors was vindicated by the utter failure of the Act of Uniformity, and that led to a spirited and graphic description of the present state of the Establishment. The success of the Free Churches, on the other hand, was ascribed to the spontaneity and freedom of their action, for "they must grow or they will die," and the condition of the country does not warrant the belief that the time is past when the spiritual force which they are capable of wielding is no longer required. The position of the Ultramontanes and Anglicans was described with both acuteness and force, and the advantages possessed by the Free Churches in the contest with both were pointed out. There were difficulties and dangers to be mastered, and faithfulness, labour, and courage were needed to enable them to discharge their duties. The address was published as soon as it had been delivered, and, effective as it was in delivery, it will be found to be yet more effective and useful when quietly studied, as it is to be hoped it will be, as a word spoken in season, and spoken with fearlessness and power.

The appointment of a "committee of reference," and the introduction of Dr. Wilks, of Montreal; Pastor Fisch, of Paris, and of other visitors, was quickly despatched. Then followed a paper by the Rev. J. B. Paton, of Nottingham, on "Modern Priestly Pretensions in relation to national Independence," which dealt with the struggle between the continental governments and Ultramontanism. It may be described as being pro-Bismarck in character; the writer insisting that we must not give liberty to tyranny, and eschewing the phrase "a free Church in a free State," as being a deceiving phrase—inasmuch as the word free was used in a different sense by Ultramontanes from that in which it was used by Nonconformists. He concluded by laying down a series of propositions, some of which, it will be seen, were of a very debateable character.

The Rev. Ll. Bevan then moved a resolution which was originally intended to avoid expressing an opinion on the policy of the German Government in regard to the Romish Church; while it insisted on the necessity for resisting its pretensions. Mr. Dale, however, I believe, intervened with another resolution, which expressly affirmed that the only mode of dealing with Romish or other Churches was for governments to have nothing to do with them. This was moved by the Rev. Ll. Bevan, in a written speech, of a solid character. He, too, insisted on the importance of having clear views on the subject, and on the necessity for the absolute independence of Church and State. The relation of the German Government to the Church was an altogether false one; for the State, as such, should have nothing to do with the Church. Mr. Parkinson, of Rochdale, followed in a speech which imparted an element of vivacity into the discussion. He congratulated the chairman on the influence he had exerted in London; coming, as he did, from "the back of the north wind," and, in a very lively way, he referred to several facts relating to America and Canada which showed that the mode of dealing with the question there had been successful. Then, turning to the immediate point in debate, he said that the Lutheran and other Churches did not object to the German policy, from which he inferred that it could not be called persecuting.

Mr. Statham, of Hull, followed in an almost fiery speech, of a strong Protestant type. He did not believe in the separation principle as a means of solving the difficulty. We should have to deal with Rome here, and must put our foot down—one means of doing it being the banishment of the Jesuits and the taking them by the throat! He hinted that the assembly was too cowardly to express sympathy with Prince Bismarck; at any rate, it had been cleverly avoided in the resolution. If Bismarck was rolled in the dust, Ultramontanism would triumph; while his success would secure the safety of Protestantism in Prussia—with much more in the same strain.

Mr. Dale—who had been pointedly referred to by Mr. Statham—rose as soon as that gentleman had sat down, and had a most warm reception. He described the two methods of dealing with religion, saying that Governments might let it alone, and then resist all encroachments on its own province; or they might try to regulate religious affairs. Prince Bismarck had adopted the second plan, and, in doing so, had violated the principles of liberty, and acted on principles which affected all churches, whether endowed or unendowed. Referring to Mr. Statham's denunciation of the Jesuits, Mr. Dale said that if they broke the laws they should be punished like other men; but to punish them untried would be a flagrant offence against principles which the Union was bound to uphold. The Rev. R. Macbeth followed, speaking in an anti-Bismarckian sense. To him succeeded Mr. Eustace Conder, who pointed out that a political Church must have political relations to the Church; and that the Roman Catholic was more than a Church. Its foundation principle was despotism, and it was in opposition to the fundamental principles of English life. He suggested an alteration in the resolution; but the suggestion was not accepted by the mover, and he declined to move an amendment. Dr. Halley differed somewhat from both Mr. Dale and Mr. Statham; but insisted that if the clergy in Germany were the servants of the State, they must not complain of the State's rule over them. The discussion was a very animated one, but was not sufficiently exhaustive, and I fancy that many of the audience—insufficiently informed as to the facts of the case—must have voted for the resolution with some uncertainty as to its exact bearing on some of the questions which had been raised. It was, however, carried without opposition.

Dr. Allon then moved a resolution, insisting on the necessity for efforts to check the growth of Ritualism, and, in doing so expressed the opinion that much of the preaching of the present day was too sentimental. It should be more theological, but the theology should be applied to the practical affairs of life. Dr. Robertson, of Cambridge, who seconded the motion, thought that the scepticism and rationalism of the day required to be dealt with quite as much as Ritualism or Romanism. The discussion on this topic was but brief, for the previous topic had almost exhausted both the time and the interest of the meeting. At that point an adjournment took place, most of the delegates proceeding to the dinner at the Cannon-street Hotel.

On Friday the Union will meet at the Weigh House, and it is intended to devote a good part of the sitting to questions connected with the revival of religion; Dr. Kennedy reading the principal paper. It is also likely that resolutions relating to the agricultural labourers and to the Government Licensing Bill will be proposed. In the evening there is to be a conversazione at the Cannon-street Hotel; which will close the proceedings of the Union.

THE CONFERENCE OF THE LIBERATION SOCIETY.

(From the *Leeds Mercury*.)

Within a few weeks of the overthrow of the Liberal Government, at a time when the Liberal party is, to use Mr. Leatham's phrase, in a state bordering upon paralysis, the Liberation Society has held one of the most successful conferences it has ever known, and has begun a movement intended to bring about the separation of Church and State in the shortest possible space of time. Such audacity is amazing to many persons, who think that the Liberation Society is merely making itself contemptible by the utterly useless agitation in which it is engaged. That the Radical party should venture upon thus bodily assuming the aggressive, at a time when Radical opinions have suffered so severe a defeat at the polling-booths, is regarded as a proof of the fact that Nonconformists are thoroughly unpractical men, with no power to read the evident signs of the times. But there are others, and we confess that we are ourselves among them, who do not regard this conference of the Liberation Society as a mere empty flourish of trumpets, under cover of which a defeated party may hide its discomfiture. On the contrary, we believe that there is here the true and only possible outcome of the Liberal defeat of last February. The Liberal party was then shown to be disorganised and disunited, and in consequence of its miserable divisions, the power of directing its affairs and sealing its fate in too many places passed into the hands of the crochet-mongers and their allies. Before the party can again be secure of victory, one or two things must have happened. Either the Tory Government must have wearied and disgusted all classes by its administration of the public affairs, or the public opinion of the country must have ripened upon one of the great "unfinished questions" with which the Liberal statesmen of the future must deal. With Mr. Cross's Licensing Bill before us, as a specimen of the kind of legislation which is to distinguish Mr. Disraeli's term of office, we do not believe that we shall have very long to wait before we are brought face to face with the first of these alternatives. But there are many Liberals who fear that the Government by doing nothing may save itself from making mistakes, and they are naturally anxious that the party to which they belong should recover its position in the country by becoming once more the representative of popular opinion upon a great and "burning" question. It is this feeling which has inspired the Liberation Society in the course it has now adopted, and which has led to the beginning of another great movement against that religious Establishment which has resisted so many attacks in the past.

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The practical question to which Mr. Leatham, Mr. Morley, and Mr. Goldwin Smith addressed themselves at the conference of the Liberation Society must before long be considered by the leaders of the Liberal party. They may not come to the conclusion reached by the Liberationists, that it is by a movement against the connection of Church and State that the disunited forces of the Liberals must be once more brought into a compact and disciplined body; but they will at least be forced to acknowledge that without the aid of the Nonconformists it will be well-nigh impossible for their party ever to return to power. This is the fact upon which many men dwelt with not unnatural emphasis at the conference of the present week; and their declaration that in the future they would not consent to be dragged at the heels of any political party, showed the passionate eagerness with which they aspire to perfect independence of action. We are not among those who believe that Nonconformists can do no wrong, or that everything for which they ask ought to be granted without thought as to the practical consequences; but we do believe that they are right in calling for the separation of Church and State, and we trust that they will succeed in converting the opinion of the country to the same view of the question. Whether the disestablishment of the English Church should or should not be the great question at the next general election, it is certain that it must become the test question addressed to the whole nation before many who are now young have grown old; and it is therefore the duty of the Nonconformists, and those who think with them to be prepared for the day of battle whenever it may come. This renewed activity on the part of the Liberation Society comes at a time when the cause of disestablishment is aided by many movements within the Church. Politically speaking, the Nonconformists are at this moment under a cloud, but they have the satisfaction of knowing that whilst they are comparatively powerless, others are doing their work. In the meantime they do well to spend the interval of rest from legislative action which has been forced upon them, in preparing the country for the time when the united Liberal party will place disestablishment in the first place on its programme, and carry it with the same success as that which has accompanied all the great movements of the past to which it has devoted its undivided strength.

(From the *Manchester Examiner*.)

The Liberation Society has been keeping its thirtieth birthday, and eleven hundred delegates from all parts of the country assembled to take part in its strenuous rejoicings. Thirty years is a long time in the life of an individual, and almost a generation in the chronology of States. An association founded for the achievement of a great practical purpose can hardly have lived so long without having in it the seeds of permanent vitality, and when it has not only lived, but has grown stronger year by year, and is now more vigorous, more combative, more confident, and more powerfully aided by comtemporary opinion than at any previous period in its career, experience warrants us in entertaining no doubt of its ultimate triumph.

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Measured by the test which is most appreciated in a commercial age, the Liberation Society is certainly in earnest. To convert that large part of the nation which still needs converting will need the employment of many agencies, and it is necessary to provide the sinews of war. For this purpose it is proposed to raise a fund of 100,000*l.* during the next five years, and the 22,000*l.* which was raised on the spot is a pretty good earnest of the success that is likely to crown its financiering arrangements. Lectures and pamphlets—these are the engineering tools to be employed. Those who espouse other views can adopt similar measures, and the result can hardly fail to be a great increase of sincere conviction on one side or the other. The speakers at the conference recognise the apparent check their cause received at the last election, but they decline to admit that it goes below the surface. The disestablishment party is as strong in the new Parliament as it was in the old, while the result of the elections, though adverse to the retention of power by a Liberal Administration, proves, at all events, the extent to which the broader political questions, among which those of an ecclesiastical complexion take the foremost place, have absorbed the attention of the public.

The Liberation Society is strong in itself, and in the concurrent tendencies of opinion, but it is, above all, strong in the weakness of its opponents. If the Church were united it might fight a long and perhaps a victorious battle, but that is a condition which does not exist, and which can never be realised. The sects outside the Establishment are concord itself compared with the dissensions which prevail within. To quote Mr. Goldwin Smith, in one church you find Protestantism, in another Rationalism, in the third the Mass. Mr. Beresford Hope cries out that the Church is wide enough to hold them all, and that such changes must be adopted in the services and creeds of the Church as will content them all. But it is not in the nature of these three contending parties to be content with each other. They deem one another children of Belial. In the organs of the press devoted to them they hit out like prize-fighters, and curse like Billingsgate fishfags. They openly set the law at defiance, and rely for immunity upon the powerlessness of the State to bring them to book for their offences. A desperate attempt is now being made to ensure some decent approach to uniformity in the ministrations of the Church, but it can only succeed by investing the bishops with arbitrary power. The clergy protest that if the archbishops' bill passes they will become the mere slaves of their diocesans, but these same clergy ignore altogether the rights of their congregations, who are at present helplessly

enslaved to them. It is impossible that this state of things can long endure. Three souls cannot possibly live in the same body, and it will be needful ere long to give the thrust that will emancipate them all. For practical purposes the Liberation Society includes the whole of the bishops and clergy. The larger half of its task is in fact undertaken by the Church itself, and those who assail it from without are less formidable than those who are busily destroying it from within.

THE ARCHBISHOPS' CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.

In the House of Lords on Monday the Archbishop of Canterbury moved the second reading of the Public Worship Regulation Bill, and the Archbishop of York, in seconding the motion, said the bill was rendered necessary by the great irritation created by practices in the celebration of Divine worship which were offensive to the laity, and he maintained that the bishops were powerless to prevent them on account of the great expense and delay occurring before a stop could be put to such practices by legal process. He contended that it was not requisite to submit the proposed bill in the first instance to Convocation, and he pointed out that it was, in reality, very much the same in substance as the proposal recommended by the Convocation of Canterbury in 1869. The bill was not a penal measure, but the promoters of it wished that, in conformity with the old rules of the Church, the bishop's court should be the exponent of the law, and that no incumbent should be allowed to indulge at his own caprice in practices offensive to the laity, and which, unless checked at once, would cause congregations to drop off from the Church. He admitted that communications on the subject of the bill which had been received by the bishops showed that certain modifications were required in the measure, and, after mentioning certain amendments which they were willing to agree to, he observed that this question must not be looked on as a squabble between the bishops and a portion of the clergy, but as a matter vital to the constitution of the Church.

Lord Shaftesbury was not prepared to oppose the second reading of the bill, for he thought that a measure proposed by the right reverend prelates was entitled to respectful consideration; but though all persons were agreed that "something" must be done, he was of opinion that that "something" should not be done in the proposed fashion. It did not appear to him that the proposed amendments, as far as he understood them, were adequate for the purpose, but, taking the bill as printed, he first of all objected to the constitution of the new court, and especially to the great powers given to the bishop, as well as to other matters connected with the jurisdiction of the court, and among other things to the immediate execution of judgment, even after notice of appeal should be given. He did not see how anything in the bill could reach such practices as the Archbishop of Canterbury alluded to the other night, or how it would deal with the confessional, which was spreading very rapidly, and was fraught with great danger to the constitution of the Church.

The Bishop of Peterborough replied with much vigour to some of the remarks of Lord Shaftesbury, and maintained it was incumbent on the House to find some remedy for practices grievous to the people. It would be unreasonable to delay applying a remedy until the law was reformed, for then the result would be that, by the time the law should be reformed, there would be no Church left at all. Therefore, after much consideration, he had most reluctantly come to the conclusion that some legislation on the subject was necessary, but he hoped the bill would be much modified in committee. The real evil was that we are endeavouring to govern the Church by obsolete laws passed more than 200 years ago. Therefore, the remedy was to be sought in effecting a searching and complete reform of those laws. If the Church were given some internal power of self-regulation with regard to these minute rubrical details, he was satisfied that the good feeling and good sense of the great majority of Churchmen would soon find a happy solution of the present unhappy difficulties.

Lord Ebury would vote with pleasure for the second reading of the bill, which he believed would compel the Church to take measures to get rid of some obsolete rubrics. The Duke of Marlborough feared that the court created by the bill in each diocese would have too large and unlimited powers, and that, as different decisions might be come to, the result might be the greatest possible confusion. He also believed that the procedure would be uncertain and unsatisfactory, and under these circumstances he urged the bishops not to proceed with this measure hastily, but, after having elicited the opinion of the House as to the necessity of legislation, to leave the matter in the hands of the responsible Government. Lord Nelson hoped that sufficient time would be allowed to elapse before going into committee, so that the House might see what the proposed amendments were, for the bill as printed was a bill which would operate harshly against the clergy. Lord Harrowby said that everybody in the country agreed that something must be done, and, therefore, he deprecated the advice to wait and do nothing. For his part he was thankful to the right reverend prelates for coming forward to meet the great difficulty existing in the Church, and, whatever faults existed, the bill might be amended in committee. Lord Hatherley would vote for the second reading of the bill, and expressed a hope that it might pass into law during the present session, for it was a great grievance to parishioners to find that there was no effective mode of enforcing the law and for having the Church service performed in the way they had a right to see it performed. Lord Bath denied that the bill would promote the discipline of the Church, enforce obedience to the law, or establish uniformity.

Lord Selborne, after declaring that from no quarter could the present bill have proceeded with greater propriety and authority than from the Archbishop of Canterbury, went on to say that the objection taken to the measure that it would give the bishops too much power, was greatly exaggerated. He suggested that the bishops should have the power, whenever they had reason to believe that the directions in the Book of Common Prayer were not properly observed or that anything unauthorised was being done, to direct incumbents to conform with the law, a power of appeal, conducted in an inexpensive manner, being allowed to the archbishop's court. He also suggested that there should be a power of appeal in all such cases to the Supreme Court of Appeal.

Lord Limerick defended the High Church party against the charge of setting the law at defiance, and expressed regret that the bill had been introduced at the present time. Lord Shrewsbury also disapproved the bill, but he expected it would be modified in committee.

Lord Salisbury said the Government would not oppose the second reading of a bill introduced with the concurrence of the right rev. bench; but they did not take on themselves responsibility for the mode in which the bill dealt with the subject. It could not be denied that the bill was not introduced without cause, for the lawlessness of a certain portion of the clergy called for legislation, while at the same time it was impossible not to be struck with the extreme difficulties by which legislation on the subject was surrounded, as many of the things objected to were precisely those which no legislation could reach, and the question arose whether legislation would not destroy some things which it was desirable to preserve. He said the Government would reserve their opinion on the details of the measure until they saw what those details really were, but he warned the House to take care lest a great party should be alienated from the Church by the passing of the bill.

Lord Grey said it was clear that an attempt was being made by a certain number of the clergy to bring back the Church of England more nearly to the Church of Rome, and it was against such an attempt that the present bill was directed. He looked upon the bill as affording a fair ground on which legislation might be based, and he trusted the present session would not be allowed to terminate without an endeavour being made to put an end to the objectionable practices which had been complained of.

The Archbishop of Canterbury replied to some observations which had fallen from Lord Salisbury, who, he hoped, would separate himself from those now bringing about great injury to the Church by open disobedience to its laws. The bill would have the effect of preventing many objectionable practices at present being carried on by certain clergymen. An endeavour was being made in some quarters to represent that the bill would cause confusion and heartburnings, but he had such confidence in the good sense and loyalty of the people of this country, as to believe that if Parliament created a tribunal easy of access to them they would be found satisfied with it. He would propose that the bill be committed *pro formâ* this day, in order to have the amendments inserted in it.

The Duke of Richmond said that from what had passed in the course of the debate it was quite evident that some legislation in the matter was absolutely necessary; but when any attempt was made to deal with it practically it was found to be full of difficulty, because the Church consisted of more than one party, and care must be taken that in endeavouring to conciliate one party another should not be alienated.

The bill was then read a second time.

DISTRAINTS FOR VICAR'S RATE.—In the parish of Halifax a vicar's rate is levied by special Act of Parliament upon householders to raise the stipend of the Vicar of Halifax, amounting to about 1,500*l.* per annum. Many refuse to pay the rate, and last week three of these persons living at Hebden Bridge, seven miles from the parish church of Halifax, were distrained upon for the rate. On Saturday evening an open-air "indignation meeting," numerously attended, was held at Hebden Bridge, and an Anti-Vicar's Rate Association was formed.

ANOTHER BURIAL SCANDAL.—A correspondent at Beckenham writes—"Mr. Woodcock, a working man in this parish, and a Baptist by religion, recently suffered the bereavement of two of his children, and buried them both the same day and in the same grave, at the parish church. The High-Church rector, becoming apprised of the fact of their not being baptized, denied the use of the burial service. The parents, however, bore their trial with becoming Christian fortitude, and put their little ones into the ground; a Christian friend praying at the grave. Still, they could not but feel the cruelty of the ecclesiastical ban that had classed the innocent with the 'excommunicate and the suicide.'"

IRISH CHURCH SYNOD.—In the General Synod of the Irish Church on Thursday, Mr. Saunderson proposed his motion for the repeal of that article of the constitution of the General Synod by which it is required that in all questions of revision of the Prayer Book affecting doctrine no change shall be made without the consent of two-thirds of each order. After discussion the House divided with the following result:—Clergy—ayes, 5; noes, 129. Laity—ayes, 80; noes, 58. The motion was therefore negatived. The points decided by the Synod in the direction of revision of the formularies relate to the communion service, the baptismal office, and the Athanasian Creed. The resolutions arrived at are described in the Church papers as merely provisional. The whole subject must come up again next year, and the agitation is to be maintained actively by the societies which have taken it in hand. The synod sat twenty-five days, and it was remarkable that the attendance of the laity, chiefly country gentlemen, was well maintained to the close.

Religious and Denominational News.

The Rev. H. J. Betts, of Manchester, has accepted the cordial and unanimous invitation of the Grange-road Baptist Church, Darlington, to become their pastor, and will commence his stated labours there at Midsummer.

WEYMOUTH.—The public recognition of the Rev. E. Bolton (late of Preston) as the minister of Gloucester-street Chapel, Weymouth, took place on Thursday, April 30. The Rev. R. J. Ashton (late minister of the chapel), F. Beckley, B. Gray, Thomas Neave, F. J. Austin, W. Lewis, and others took part in the proceedings, which were of a very interesting and encouraging character.

PETWORTH.—Mr. J. R. Wilson, M.A., of Trinity College, Cambridge, was publicly recognised as a Christian minister, and assistant to the Rev. Henry Rogers, in the Congregational Church, Petworth, on Tuesday, April 28. In the morning, the introductory service was conducted by the Rev. S. S. England. A discourse on the nature of a Christian Church was delivered by the Rev. J. B. Paton, M.A.; the Rev. J. R. Thomson, M.A., asked the questions; the Rev. Henry Rogers offered the prayer; the Rev. D. G. Watt, M.A., gave the charge to the minister, and the Rev. W. Knight concluded with prayer. In the evening, the introductory service was conducted by the Rev. Robert Hamilton, and a sermon was preached by the Rev. J. B. Figgis, M.A.

REGENT'S PARK CHAPEL.—On Tuesday afternoon, last week, the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon preached the anniversary sermon in connection with this place of worship, and in the evening, after tea, the annual meeting of the church and congregation was held in the chapel. The chair was taken by the Hon. Sir Robert Lush. The chairman, in his introductory speech, intimated that the church, by a vote passed with great unanimity, had resolved to ask their pastor to take a three months' holiday, beginning with next month. His lordship very happily expressed the sentiments of the brethren which had led them to adopt this resolution, and hoped that their beloved pastor would return in September strengthened and invigorated for his work by this period of rest. He was followed by Colonel Griffin, who said that some of the friends had resolved that their pastor should not go away empty-handed, and in twenty-four hours one hundred guineas had been subscribed, of which he begged Dr. Landels' acceptance. The Rev. J. C. Page, the well-known missionary, in the name of the congregation, presented a parting gift to Mr. John Landels, the second son of the pastor, on his leaving home to settle as the minister of the Baptist Church in Kirkcaldy, that gift being fifty-two volumes of theological books, of the value of twenty guineas, which had been wisely chosen by the friends making the present. Mr. John Landels having briefly thanked the friends, was succeeded by his father, who said he had been quite taken aback by the gift conveyed to him through Colonel Griffin, and, like his son, he felt quite unable to respond. He could honestly testify that they were the kindest and most generous people that ever a minister laboured amongst, and when he said so, the words came from the depths of a grateful heart. He had not been ill, but he had not been well. He must talk the matter over with the elders, and if he saw that the church would not suffer, he should take the rest with a good conscience and enjoy it as much as a man can enjoy rest after long labour. He would go with his second son to Sicily, where he was going to leave him. After a short address from Dr. Culross, of Highbury, Mr. C. H. Goode, as treasurer of the church, made a most satisfactory statement as to its financial affairs, and amongst other items of information it appeared that the office-bearers had, during the past year, effected the purchase of the ground-rent, at an outlay of more than two thousand pounds. The contributions during the year, on behalf of foreign missions, had reached the sum of nearly 300*l.* The Revs. Dr. Angus, H. S. Booth, and J. Bailey, B.A., of Weymouth, and other speakers followed.

Much damage is said to have been done to the vines in France by the late frosts. In the Macon district half the crop will, it is estimated, be lost.

THE PEACE SOCIETY will hold its annual meeting on Tuesday evening next at the Weigh-House Chapel, Henry Pease, Esq., presiding. It will be seen from an advertisement elsewhere that a very attractive list of speakers has been provided.

Correspondence.

THE LIBERATION CONFERENCE—WHAT NEXT?

To the Editor of the Nonconformist.

SIR,—On all hands I am hearing, from both those who were present and those who were absent, of the great success of the Liberation conference and public meeting of last week, and that success may, therefore, be regarded as undoubted. But, I suppose, that those who convened the conference wished for success of two kinds—one relating to the present, and the other to the future. That the Liberation movement has lost none of its vitality, the leaders of the movement none of their resoluteness, and their followers none of their confidence in their leaders, are facts which may be considered to be conclusively proved. That is something—or, rather, under existing circumstances, a great deal. Then a policy has been agreed upon—a policy definite, decisive, and far-reaching—and agreed upon with a degree of unanimity favourably contrasting with the want of it which has, in late years, been shown in *some* of the acts of the friends of religious equality. In regard to national education agreement has not yet been established; but in regard to disestablishment there is not a discordant note, and even the practical application of the disestablishment principle to current politics occasions no diversity of opinion.

But what next? is the question which, even at this moment of justifiable exaltation, should press itself on the attention of Liberators. Great conferences often pass great resolutions, which are not followed by great results. The Manchester Conference of 1872 was large, enthusiastic, and, both in speech and resolve, almost passionate. But, if a reaction did not actually follow, it will probably be admitted that the pitch of the Nonconformist note was lowered as time went on, and that what was resolved upon by men whose feelings were at a white heat was not always executed when they had entered the colder zone in which reflection, and the practical aspects of life, exercise a powerful influence.

The atmosphere of Cannon-street Hall was cooler than that of the Manchester Conference, and, for that reason, the results are likely to be more lasting. But the determination expressed last week was very grave in its character, and, if it really be acted upon, will powerfully influence the politics of this country for some years to come. *That the Liberal party must not return to office until it is prepared to disestablish the Churches of England and Scotland*—that is the decision of the Liberation Society and its supporters; and whether right or wrong, it is a great decision. And it is linked with another conclusion, of almost equal importance—that just now, when the Liberal party is without leaders, without a policy, and without heart, is the moment of moments for the Liberation party to step forward, to supply the inspiring influences and the resistless force which are needed to realise so great an object.

That the Executive of the Liberation Society looked before they leaped is shown, not only by the frankness which characterised their utterances, but by the plan which they submitted in outline to the conference. I suppose that the exigencies of time made it impossible; but the fuller discussion of these plans, by some of the many practical men who were present, would have been of great value. The plans, however, are on record, and the delegates will do well carefully to consider them, and with a double purpose. They are, no doubt, capable of improvement, and, before the executive committee are committed to them, sagacious men, all over the kingdom, should consider how they may be advantageously modified, or supplemented. The committee have said plainly that they wish the metropolis and the provinces to be more closely united in this enterprise than hitherto, and the addition of fifty provincial members to the committee indicates that they mean what they say in this matter. Let the country take its proper place in the great crusade. Let the north, by its energy and liberality, energise and liberalise the south; and let there be between London, Birmingham, Manchester, and Bradford a friendly rivalry in supplying a motive power which will be felt in every nook and corner of our island.

Nor let smaller places leave the agitation in the hands of the great towns. *They have hitherto shewn a disposition to do this*, and perhaps, the disposition has not been without excuse. No excuse can—as a general rule—be pleaded now. As the battle becomes severer it must spread. As new armies are required, recruits must be found among those who have escaped past service. There must be more local activity, and—what is as necessary as activity—local courage. There are hundreds of places where, from want of both, the Liberation Society has been a name, rather than a fact, and, in the case of large classes of the community, has not been even that. That should now be changed, and the men who sat silent last week in Cannon-street are the men to make the change.

I have not placed in the foreground the resolution of the conference which fixed £100,000 as the sum of money, which should be raised during the next five years to carry on this war, because there are things more important than money, and it would be a mistake to flaunt this resolution in the face of either State-Churchmen or Liberal politicians, as the weapon on which the Liberation army mainly relies. Yet, if the resolution is not acted upon fully and quickly, it had better never have been passed. The success of this financial effort will be most helpful: its failure will be little short of calamitous. "But we'll not fail!" should be the declaration of every supporter of the society. And, "if 'twere done 'twere well 'twere quickly done." Therefore, let nobody wait for pressure to be put upon him by letters, circulars, or canvassers, but show himself to be a Voluntary by voluntarily promising his contribution to the Fund. It is a big sum which has to be raised, but not too big for the body which is appealed to to raise it; and when, in the autumn, the committee may expect to meet their friends again in conferences, committees, and meetings, they will speak and act with an authority and an effect greater than at any previous period, if they are able to report that the £100,000 fund will, without doubt, be forthcoming.

AN OLD CAMPAIGNER.

May 12, 1874.

Anniversary Meetings.

CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF ENGLAND AND WALES.

The forty-fourth annual meeting of this union was held yesterday in the Westminster Chapel, the Rev. J. Guinness Rogers, B.A., presiding. The delegates and members attended in large numbers—probably over 1,200, and filled the floor of the spacious building, whilst the first gallery was tolerably well filled with ladies and gentlemen. The upper gallery was also to some extent occupied. Amongst those present were: Mr. Hill, M.P.; Mr. J. Spicer, Rev. Dr. Raleigh, Rev. E. White, Rev. Dr. Allon, Mr. J. H. Williams, Rev. R. W. Dale, Mr. Alfred Rooker, Mr. Carvell Williams, Henry Wright, Esq.; Rev. Dr. Kennedy, Rev. Dr. Campbell, of Bradford; Rev. Dr. Mellor, of Halifax; Rev. Dr. Halley, Rev. Dr. Stoughton, Rev. H. W. Parkinson, Rev. Joshua Harrison, &c.

The proceedings began with the hymn commencing:

Lord of the living harvest,
That whitens o'er the plain,
Where angels soon shall gather
Their sheaves of golden grain.

The Rev. A. HANNAY read a portion of Scripture, and the Rev. S. Hebditch offered prayer.

The Rev. J. G. ROGERS, B.A., then proceeded to deliver an address on "Nonconformity as a Spiritual Force," a full abstract of which is given separately in our Supplement. Its delivery occupied over an hour. It was listened to with profound attention, and was frequently applauded.

At the conclusion of the chairman's address another hymn was sung, commencing:

Lord give me light to do Thy work,
For only, Lord, from Thee
Can come the light by which these eyes
The work of Truth can see.

THE REFERENCE COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY proposed that the following gentlemen be the Reference Committee—viz.: Mr. Henry Lee, of Manchester; Mr. J. Carvell Williams, London; Rev. R. M. Davies, Oldham; Rev. F. S. Williams, Nottingham; Mr. Henry Wright, London; Rev. W. Braden, London; and the Rev. Dr. Campbell, of Bradford.

The Rev. A. CLARK seconded the proposal, which was put to the meeting, and carried unanimously.

DELEGATES TO THE ASSEMBLY.

The SECRETARY (the Rev. A. Hannay) said he had the pleasure to introduce certain friends who had been delegated to attend the assembly: Dr. Wilkes, of Montreal, as the delegate from the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec; Dr. Fisch, of Paris, representing the Free Evangelical Churches in France; and Dr. Aiken, though not strictly delegated, representing the Congregationalists of the United States.

PRIESTLY PRETENSIONS.

The Rev. J. B. PATON then read the following paper on—

MODERN PRIESTLY PRETENSIONS IN RELATION TO NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE.

During this century the Papal Church has sprung upward with a mighty bound from the weakness and decay which lay upon it last century. The causes of this astounding revival I am not here to trace. Furthermore, this Church has, within the last four years, in the Vatican Council, modified its constitution, centralising its stupendous powers in Rome; and in the notorious "Syllabus" it has frankly proclaimed its ominous mission in modern society. These two latter facts, I wish with enforced brevity, but with scrupulous exactness, to elucidate. The fourth chapter of the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, "Pastor Æternus," which decreed the infallibility of the Pope, speaking *ex cathedrâ*, has excited immense interest and discussion. The third chapter has been comparatively unnoticed. Yet the fourth is but the fitting, if not the necessary, pendant of the third chapter, and of its annexed canon, which declare that the Roman Pontiff has the complete and the supreme power of jurisdiction in the universal Church, or, as it is with obtrusive emphasis repeated, the entire fulness of this supreme power; and that his supreme episcopal power operates immediately, in every diocese, and over every one of the faithful. By this decree, not only the doctrine of the reforming councils of Constance and Basle, which expressly attributed to the Episcopate assembled in council the supremacy over the Church and even over the Pope, but also the doctrine of *Trent* is repudiated and condemned. The latter council left the relations between the Papacy and the Episcopate indefinite; but yet solemnly declared in its 23rd session that the bishops are established in their office by the Holy Spirit, to rule the Church of God (*positos a Spiritu sancta regere ecclesiam Dei*). Thus, a certain independence was by the Tridentine decrees conceded to the bishops in their several dioceses and countries. But now that independence is abolished, the entire fulness of episcopal power dwells in the Pope; and all bishops are but deputies, or prefects, of the Absolute Monarch of the Church of Rome. The main question that was discussed and definitely settled at the Vatican Council was accurately phrased in the first sentence of a famous tractate, entitled, "Quæstio" (the "Question"), published during its session (and attributed to Bishop Ketteler, of Mainz): "Is the Government of the Church Absolute or a Tempered Monarchy? Has the entire fulness of power been given by Lord Christ to the Roman Pontiff, or has a part—certainly the most eminent part—but yet not the whole of the power, been thus given him? Or, does the Supreme and infallible teaching and judicial authority so reside in the Roman Pontiff, that he alone, without any sort of co-operation and consent of his brethren of the Church, is supreme and infallible judge?" The Vatican Council categorically decided this question, investing the Pope with these solitary and absolute prerogatives. To strengthen and uphold this central and despotic administration of so vast a dominion, it was necessary then to arm its monarch with a Divine and infallible authority. Infallibility must give its warrant to Omnipotence. See how at once this alteration of the Roman Church affects its relations to modern States. Formerly as the united Episcopate alone could impose upon Roman Catholic subjects any doctrine *de fide*—to be believed on peril of eternal damnation, the State had many guarantees against any abuse of such overwhelming spiritual authority. But now these guarantees are lost. Its authority is concentrated in one man at Rome. He alone can promulgate concerning any matter affecting the harmony and welfare of the State a sentence which every Roman Catholic must believe to be of God: and can urge at once the whole administrative power of the Church which he wields, to execute that sentence. The Roman Church, with its myriad terrific, spiritual forces, and its pliant, immense, and compactly knit organisation, thus stands obedient to its absolute head—towering athwart modern society. And what claims does it enforce? The evils and errors that afflict the present age gave occasion—as Pio Nono in his allocution informs us—for this convention of the Vatican Council. These evils and errors had been detailed and denounced in the syllabus issued with the Pope's encyclical letter of December, 1864. And the Vatican Council, by decreeing Papal infallibility not only endorsed the propositions of the syllabus, but pronounced them the sentences of an Infallible Judge. I know that there is controversy as to the marks of an "*ex cathedrâ*" proclamation and the consequent limits of Papal Infallibility. There is no controversy, however, respecting the Encyclical and Syllabus of 1864. These were, without question, "*ex cathedrâ*," and therefore are invested to a Roman Catholic with this awful attribute of Infallibility as commandments of God. Now, mark! in them, every principle which affirms the liberty of the human mind in its search of truth and of the human conscience in its religious faith and worship; every principle which inspires modern civilisation, and affirms the civil and religious liberty of citizens in the State, is there reprobated and proscribed, and all the children of the Catholic Church are commanded in like manner to reprobate and proscribe them. Civil marriage, the freedom of the press, State control of education, the toleration of any non-Roman Catholic religion; indeed every liberty of the individual and of civil communities which we conceive that the State should protect, is there condemned; whilst in repeated and explicit propositions the supremacy of the Church over the State, is affirmed and asserted. Of the eighty propositions in the Syllabus, cataloguing, I reckon, nearly seventy that denounce as the errors and evils of our time what are generally regarded as personal liberties, or as just prerogatives of the State. Learn from this fact that Rome conceives Liberty to be the death-plague which ravages modern society, and she is mustering her priestly forces to its extirpation and destruction. And learn, further, how completely Ultramontanism triumphed at the Vatican Council, and irrevocably made the Catholic Church, only Roman, altogether Ultramontane! Dr. Manning has lately been explaining and defining Ultramontanism to us. The Westminster Confession to him is fragrant with pure Ultramontanism. Dr. Chalmers was another A'Beckett when he headed his noble army of 474 ministers out of the old Assembly in St. Andrew's, Edinburgh, and founded the Free Church of Scotland. As for us Independents, whose history is a long and resplendent witness to the spirituality and freedom of Christ's Church, we are the very apostles of Ultramontane truth, and our martyrs died for the cause that has just triumphed at the Vatican. For Ultramontanism, according to this modern casuist, means the absolute separation and distinctness of the two spheres which belong respectively to Church and State, and the one English society which now exists to propagate it is the Liberation Society. Now, surely, Dr. Manning has trusted too much to the Philistinism of the English people, to our ignorance of European history, and our stone-blindness amid the blazing light of contemporaneous events, in this effrontery of misrepresentation. How the spirit of Bossuet, the old eagle of Meaux, the valiant defender of Gallican liberties against the Jesuits and Ultramontanes of his day, would have ruffled on hearing this Jacob voice seducing the English folk! Let me read part of the first of the four propositions setting forth the Gallican liberties, *i.e.*, liberties of the Gallican Church as against Rome:—"Power has been given by God to Blessed and his successors, the Vicars of Christ, and to the Church itself in spiritual matters, and those that belong to salvation, but not in civil and temporal matters; accordingly, kings and princes are not subject by the ordinance of God to ecclesiastical powers in temporal matters, and cannot, therefore, be either directly or indirectly deposed by the authority of the keys given to this Church. The Church, by virtue of its spiritual powers, can separate kings and princes from

its communion, but excommunication launched by a purely spiritual power should not take effect in the temporal domain." This extract shows that the issues involved in the long contest between Gallicanism or Cismontanism and Ultramontanism are these—on the one hand, the mutual independence of Church and State, on the other, the supremacy of the Church over the State. At length the bitter conflict of centuries is ended. Ultramontanism has utterly vanquished its adversary; but standing on the red ashes of this burning struggle, surely it was foolish audacity for Dr. Manning to assert, and it were fatuous credulity for us to believe, it is an audacious imposition, after that struggle—that *Ultramontanism* is only Gallicanism, aye, Independency under another name. Now, I wish, against Dr. Manning, before you and our countrymen to define in two succinct proportions what Ultramontanism actually is, that we may discern accurately what Dr. Manning has counterfeited with such glozing and illusory art. (1), Ultramontanism means the centralisation of all power that has existed in the Episcopate of the Roman Catholic Church, in the Pope, and is the annihilation of all direct and indirect influence of the Catholic laity in the government of the Church, as exerted through Catholic Governments or otherwise, in order that the entire fulness of that supreme power, unrestricted either by the counsel of bishops or of Catholic peoples, shall be honoured in the Pope, and may be exercised immedately by him. (2), Ultramontanism is the exaltation of the Roman See over all civil authority, and the Pope's right to subject all such authority to itself; and if it be recalcitrant, to coerce it by force or to annul it. These two principles make Ultramontanism, and the Vatican Council, I have said, has made these principles absolute and irrevocable in the Roman Church. For their denial is now heresy and everlasting anathema! In proof I pass over other propositions of the syllabus, and consider only this one, in which is reprobated and proscribed as heresy, to believe "that Roman pontiffs have ever exceeded the limits of their power, and have ever usurped the rights of princes." Now, I need not remind you that Roman pontiffs have solemnly exercised the right to depose kings, to declare national laws null and void, to absolve citizens from their allegiance, and to order Catholic princes to make slaves of all who oppose themselves to Rome; and that our own Magna Charta has been thus Papally accursed, declared invalid, as were the Sardinian laws in 1854, and the Austrian in 1868, for granting religious toleration, and for establishing what we regard as the beginnings of civil freedom. But I will quote two or three sentences from Papal letters and bulls, which I could multiply a hundredfold. Sixtus V. says:—"We are placed on the supreme throne of justice, and we have a sovereign power over kings and princes of the earth, and over all peoples, not by a human, but Divine power." Innocent III. (Epis. 2, 209)—"God has left it to Peter and his successors not to govern only the universal Church, but the whole world." Paul III. denounces excommunication against Henry VIII., King of England, in the *Bull, Ejus qui*, 1535, which thus begins:—"Standing in the place of God, seated on the throne of justice, and holding the chief sovereignty over all things of the whole earth, and all peoples"; and in a following bull headed, "Cum Redemptio," he declares the king, with all his adherents, to be excommunicated, the king to be deprived of his kingdom and his authority; all his subjects are absolved from their oath of allegiance, and forbidden to obey him; whilst all Catholic powers are commanded to wage war on Henry and his kingdom, to seize the goods of every sort which belong to those who do not revolt against him, even if they they lay outside his kingdom, which goods are then bestowed upon the marauders by the Pope as their rightful property; while all who remain faithful to Henry are to be held as *slaves*." In like manner Pius V., in the Bull *Regnans in Excelsis*, anathematises Queen Elizabeth, pronouncing himself "one set over all nations and kings as their ruler," and saying: "She is hereby deprived of her pretended right over the kingdom, and over all possessions, dignity, and sovereignty. And likewise all ranks of her subjects, and people of her kingdom; and whosoever has taken of oaths to her, are absolved from that oath, and from all bonds of fealty or duty of obedience for ever, for we hereby do absolve them; and we forbid all peoples subject to her to obey her commands, edicts, or laws." These were English monarchs. And these are the limitless limits of the power which Popes have claimed over them and over us. Now, in the past it was allowable, even for a faithful Catholic, to regard these Papal usurpations as the insane arrogance of a worldly ambition. But since the Vatican this is no longer possible: to his faith it is decreed of God that no Pope has ever usurped the rights of princes, or trespassed the limits of his legitimate power! I have thus shown the colossal hierarchy of the Roman priesthood, now subtly organised, in complete subjection to the Roman Pontiff; and likewise the dark menace with which it o'ershadows European freedom. Do not think that the foreboding omens I have pointed out are the spectres and scarecrows of a mediæval age—long buried. The Roman Church, which has ventured in our age upon Ultramontane audacities which even the medieval age would not have brooked, boasts the allegiance of 190,000,000 people'; it is compacted and inspired by living forces which it is hard to overestimate; the engines of sacerdotal tyranny which it secretly works, ply in every bosom, every family, in the confessional, at the death-bed; it is multiplying enormously its orders of regulars, which are its fighting brigades, and quartering them in every town and district in Europe; it is arraying and drilling the Catholic populations in unions, guilds and fellowships of every description, flustering and fanaticising them with amulet worship, wild miraculous legends, and spectacular pilgrimages, and, in all, with stealthy, but steadfast and relentless aim, it is pressing towards this the domination of civil power, and of every liberty which modern states honourably protect. To this end it allies itself, as occasion offers, in every land, with infidelity and with revolutionary forces in order that it may fracture established order, undermine faith, and disintegrate all social bonds, in the hope that in the chaos it creates men may the more readily accept the sacerdotal order which it believes to be divine. The history of modern Europe since Pius VII. re entered Rome in 1814—whether we look at Don Miguel in Portugal, the two Don Carlos in Spain, the Concordats of Bavaria and Austria, or the reigns of Charles X. and Napoleon III. of France—shows the same picture—the Roman priesthood after grasping after civil power, State wealth, and tyrannous dominion over the faith and freedom of men. Now the problem arises, how shall these priestly pretension be met and human freedom be saved? I am glad to raise this problem here; because, in the first place, it is the peculiar heresies we hold that have always kindled Rome's hottest fires of calumny and persecution. The Inquisition was founded in the thirteenth century, to root out those three great truths by which we love as Independents—which are with us "the master light of all our seeing," viz.—the authority of God's Word against the Roman Church; Salvation, not through priestly sacraments, but through the faith and following of Christ; and the spiritual discipline of the Church of Christ: and in the second place, because we hold that principle which, if fully apprehended and unreservedly applied, solves in my judgment, and alone solves, the problem. I do not here criticise the regulations by which continental States, both Catholic and Protestant, have sought to protect themselves against this vast conspiracy, as they deem it, of the Papal Church. For us, at least in England, there is another—a wiser, mightier policy to adopt. It is by liberty that we must conquer tyranny. But let us have a care in a conflict so tremendous that we know thoroughly and handle vigorously the grand principle of liberty with which we fight we conquer. It means not that we are to give liberty to tyranny. In this contest we must, if I may dare to say, lay no shackles on Liberty herself. We must give her freedom as she grapples with tyranny. Then, indeed, in Milton's language, and with his confidence, I know she will not be worsted in the dire encounter. Hence I eschew altogether that deceiving phrase, "A Free Church in a Free State," accepted as readily by an Ultramontane as by ourselves. It is guilty of a twofold ambignity. The word "free" is used twice in the sentence in senses that are not only different but it may be contradictory of each other, and the word Church means to a Romanist, an Anglican, and to ourselves wholly different things. As I avoid this misleading phrase, I affirm that the State should ignore Churches—as Churches—altogether. It has but one duty, to protect the liberties and rights of its own subjects — protect therefore freedom of person, of thought, and of faith; freedom of speech, and of the Press, freedom of public meeting, and of association, and freedom to hold property—to all its subjects. These it has to secure and nothing more. But thus to apprehend and apply the principle of Liberty baffles and destroys at every point priestly tyranny; for I draw from it these six corollaries, which I can only enumerate briefly and prrecisely ere I close:—1. No religious body shall enforce a lifelong vow against a subject of the State, whose right over his own person is inalienable, and is to be freely exercised at the moment. This liberty of its subjects the State must peremptorily guard. 2. Whatever property is held for religious uses, and for the benefit of any association of citizens in the State, must be held by those citizens who are thus associated. It must be subject to their free dispensation and government; if they please to put it at the temporary disposal of pope or priest, they may, but their deliberative and public sanction must continually authorise that use, and may at any time withdraw it. Neither the Pope of Rome nor his deputies, the bishops, should hold property for the religious uses of one community. The State protects the rights and liberties of its own citizens, not those of the Pope. 3. Any association of citizens should be free to accept any religious teacher or choose any religious officer, even if he be a priest nominated by the bishop, and therefore, in fact, by the Pope of Rome; but the State cannot recognise any right of Pope or bishop to impose such teacher or officer without the deliberative and public sanction of that religious community. The State must protect the rights of its own citizen to accept or reject their religious teachers and officers. It cannot allow them to hand themselves over and their families irrevocably for ever to a foreign ruler—in religious or any other matters. 4. The State should discover and punish the impurities of the confessional, as it punishes public indecency and protects public morality against the literature of Holywell street. 5. No doctrinal edict or ecclesiastical sentence of the Pope should be regarded by the State as having any value whatever in any association, or affect any contract of English citizens, be they Roman Catholics or not, save as they publicly, either in concert or individually, as the case requires, declare that they voluntarily accept the Pope's judgment. 6. That the Queen's courts of law be open to every appeal against any violation of contract, of public law, of social morality, and personal liberty—on behalf of any subject, Catholic or otherwise; and that it be a punishable offence to hinder any subject from this protection of the State. In this righteous sense I hold—we all hold, I hope—the supremacy of the Queen and of law over every Church, as over every individual in these realms.

The CHAIRMAN remarked that so great a number of points in the paper which admitted of controversy had been brought out, that it was difficult to decide which to discuss, but he would in the first place call on the Rev. Ll. Bevan to propose the first resolution.

The SECRETARY said that the resolution on the printed agenda had been withdrawn and the following had been substituted, which Mr. Bevan would propose, viz.—

"That this assembly, recognising the gravity of the political difficulties and perils arising from the doctrines and pretensions of the Ultramontane party now dominant in the Roman Catholic Church, and believing that these difficulties are greatly aggravated by the existence of organic relations between churches, whether Catholic or Protestant, and civil governments, desires to express its deliberate judgment that the civil supremacy of the State, which it is the duty of nations and governments to defend against all ecclesiastical encroachments, and the rights of conscience, which it is the duty of nations and governments to respect, can be securely and permanently maintained only by the dissolution of all relations between the Church and the State."

The Rev. Ll. BEVAN said he should be very pleased to adopt the new resolution, because it put the matter clearer and sharper than the resolution on the agenda. On the 18th July, 1870, the Pope proclaimed the doctrine of Infallibility. Two days afterwards Napoleon III. proclaimed war against Prussia. On the 2nd of September the French Emperor surrendered at Sedan. Three weeks afterwards Victor Emmanuel entered Rome; so that, within a few months after the proclamation of Infallibility, the temporal power of the Pope had gone. The dogma of Infallibility was the final step in a long progress of events by which the Roman Pontiff claimed full authority over both Church and State. The events of the German war, to a certain extent, prevented us in this country from realising at that time the effect of the dogma of Infallibility; but since the war, men had begun to find that there had arisen from that dogma difficult problems for the statesman of every country in Europe, and that the old foe to human welfare had taken to itself new life, and was prepared to claim authority over every human soul, and to refuse to recognise the sovereignty of every free state. This had appeared in Prussia more than elsewhere at present; but it was by no means certain that we in this country would not soon have to take our place in the battle. The destinies of Prussia were in the hands of Prince Bismarck. Hitherto the movements in the battle were plain enough, the progress of Ultramontanism was clearly seen, and the Jesuits had put forth the pretensions of Rome with effrontery. The result was that there sprung up in Germany a movement known as the Old Catholic movement, consisting of those who refused to accept the new dogma. This party was visited with the censure of Rome. The Government took no part in the controversy till the "Old Catholics" were excommunicated, and then it refused to act in obedience to the Court of Rome; and thus was sounded the first note of the conflict between Bismarck and the Pope. The German Government remembering the bitter lesson it had previously learned in its first attempt to control the Catholic Church, Prince Bismarck proceeded to take decisive action. He refused to aid the Ultramontaine party against the "Old Catholics;" and then followed the law relating to the limits to be observed by ecclesiastics, and the regulations by which a person might sever his connection with the Church by a declaration before a civil magistrate; other laws related to the education and appointment of priests—and thus Prince Bismarck had thrown down the gauntlet which had been taken up boldly and straightforwardly by the Ultramontane party. He hoped that, as they all held some views on this important matter, they would clearly express them today. It was manifest that such an important question must bring up other questions connected with the relations of Church and State, and it was as well they should have distinct views upon them. Whatever views they took, they must have as the fundamental principle, the absolute and entire independence of Church and State. They must hold that the State, as such, had nothing whatever to do with the Church as such, and that each should be left to their respective duties. Their respective views, their spirit, and their laws, were unlike. The interference of one with the other was always an injury to both. Favour extended by the State to any one Church must be always an injustice to all other churches. Endowment to any one religious community was only less abhorrent than concurrent endowment of all. (Hear, hear.) Hence the relation borne by the State to the Church in Germany was a false one, irreligious, and inhuman. It was said that this was not a practical question, and that matters were not ripe for so drastic a treatment or separation of Church and State; but he was not so sure of that. From their point of view no severance of the bond between civil and ecclesiastical communities at any time would affright them. They could happily appeal to the history of Congregationalists—a body not only neglected, but even persecuted and beaten down by the State, which still lived, and lived proudly, to do such works, a, by God's help, they were able to do without any state support. (Hear, hear.) They commended this principle therefore to the German Chancellor. The Church need not suffer by it; they were quite sure of that;—at least the true Church, for which alone they, as religious men, need greatly care. The State would be discharged from ten thousand difficulties which environed it; in that way only would the nation's liberty be secured. This result of the present difficulty was not likely, however, to be seen at once; and, meanwhile such measures must be taken as were suitable to present circumstances. The Church of Rome claimed complete authority over all questions appertaining to truth and morals; by which was meant complete and absolute sovereignty over the entire range of human life, not merely in spiritual things, but also in all other things; in fact, the complete and unconditional supremacy of the Court of Rome. Now, first of all, they must observe that Germany accepted the Church which held such doctrines as an established Church, accorded to it rights and privileges, and even carried out its ecclesiastical decisions; it accepted the dogma, and placed itself in the hands of the Ultramontanes. The Catholic Church would argue that it was absurd to establish the Church and then destroy its essence; but to allow the claims of the sovereignty of the Church would be fatal to the existence of any State. The most keen-sighted politicians were be-

ginning to see this, and the truth was being faintly uttered to-day by Catholic professors on the Continent. This principle must in time be fully seen by practical statesmen, and if its own logic was not recognised the irresistible logic of facts would establish it beyond a doubt. Germany, France, Italy, and Austria were all in a false position. It would be found impossible to have both an ally and an enemy at the same time. Such a danger as the Church of Rome was becoming could only be met by the separation of Church and State. These were days of compromise, but in this case compromise was impossible, especially with priests like those of Rome. As the resolution now proposed expressed it, there must be security and liberty for all citizens. Ultramontanism was a huge earthly system, asserting its demand both in the sphere of the secular and the spiritual. In resisting this, however, they must be careful not to push their rights too far until they became tyrannical, otherwise the spiritual communities might become despotic, to the injury of true individual conscience. They must remember they were citizens, and that their civil and religious liberties had risen together, and if they fell would fall together also. This movement on the continent, therefore, could not take place without their feeling a deep interest in it. Archbishop Manning would have them test the power of the spirit against the power of the world. They were quite sure, however, that the dogma of Infallibility was not the doctrine of the Word of God, and that whoever fought against it for liberty was fighting on the side of Christ and God. The struggle for religious freedom and civil liberty was an old one. What would be the result of the present battle they could not tell; but their own position was clear and distinct. An almighty Church or an almighty State they utterly abhorred. Their principle must be free churches and free men—liberty to citizens and liberty to Christians.

The Rev. HENRY W. PARKINSON, of Rochdale, in seconding the resolution, thanked the chairman for the influence which he had diffused amongst the Congregationalists since he had come to London from the north, at the back of the north wind. (Laughter.) There had been a good deal of invigoration in the religious life of the metropolis, and their friends in the north considered that it had been received from them through the chairman. (Hear, hear.) It was good for them at the present moment to look abroad, and for a few moments he would like to take a wider view than had been taken by the two preceding speakers. It had been stated that the Church was doing its best to separate itself from the control of the State, and that the State was doing its best to separate itself from the control of the Church; and it seemed to him that, when these two authorities so hotly disagreed the separation ought to be very easy. (Laughter.) In Ame ica, for example, where the principle of union was only partially applied for a very short time, they had so far realised religious freedom that they would not go back again to a system of patronage, even if they had the opportunity; but in America they nad a happy and contented people under those circumstances, while here we had a discontented people endeavouring to find out the means of bringing about a separation of the Church from the State. It had been proved that in America there was quite enough religious accommodation for the population, accommodation for fifty-six per cent. of the population—and the Bishop of Illinois had stated, in a speech at Cambridge, that they had solved the problem of relying upon their own resources, and there was much better support for the Church than under the old system of grants from the State. So in Canada they found the same condition of things, and the Bishop of Ontario had stated that they would not go back to the old condition of things, if they could. The same view of the matter came across the sea from South Australia, and also from New South Wales, and the Bishop of Sydney had borne testimony to the fact that Sunday was better observed in Sydney than it was in London. In Victoria the same process was going on. In Jamaica and the Bahama Islands they would neither have State patronage nor State endowment. If they came back to Europe they found that the State was endeavouring to release itself from the patronage of ecclesiastical tyranny. Statesmen, and even Conservative statesmen, had said, "Gentlemen, if this thing were not up it would never be set up—(laughter)—there is no possible objection to its being down except the unpleasant work of pulling it down." In Italy the union had been broken, and so in Spain, where it was a significant fact that the State was first connected with the Church in Europe. In Switzerland they were fighting the same battle; and in France, where they were so much engaged in struggles for political existence, the priestly party had stood very little chance at the ballot urns. In Germany they saw at present a very novel scheme of concurrent endowment, where not only the Catholic Church, but the Lutheran, the Reformed, and the United Protestant Churches, had their ministers paid by the State. From this he drew the deduction that the war of Prince Bismarck against the Ultramontanes was not a war against religious opinion, because the other churches saw no wrong in it, and were content to submit themselves to the laws of their country. And therefore he did not think the Government in Germany should be called a persecuting Government. It was curious to know that the people at Bonn had been taught that Bismark himself wanted to be Pope—(laughter)—and this reminded him of Mr. Ward Beecher's saying, "I do not object to the Pope; I only object to his being my Pope, for I am Pope enough for myself." They must recognise the equal right of the Church and State to exist; all they desired was that truth might prevail.

The Rev. W. M. STATHAM, of Hull, said he felt he should not be discharging his conscience if he did not say a word about the alteration of this resolution. It seemed to him that the resolution said that if they separated the Church from the State they would solve all the difficulties of this problem. (Cries of "No, no!") That, however, was what he understood it to be, and it would simply mean that a let-alone policy would be enough in dealing with Rome. If that was not the spirit of the resolution he had mistaken it. Rome was not, in this country, in alliance with the State; and he would like to know, although he might stand in a minority, how they were going to deal with Rome in this country. Were they going to wait until, by public consent, there should be a disestablished Church? or were they going to allow Rome to put her foot down in this country as she was already doing? He must say that if they had a separation of Church and State to-morrow, unless they were to have the host carried about the streets, the law must interfere with Rome some way or other. There were some gentlemen so fond of the ultimate principles of Protestantism that he believed they would permit any conceivable thing of that sort, although they knew what their fathers thought of such matters. In that excellent memorial by Mr. Paxton Hood of the departed Mr. Binney they would find an expression of opinion by Mr. Binney that they would never be able to deal with Rome unless they dealt with her by the law of the land. He (the speaker) believed that, if they did not banish the Jesuits from England again, they would have to take them by the throat. (Laughter.) He believed that the whole history of Europe showed that the first tyrannies had been perpetrated in the name of liberty, when the name of liberty had been misunderstood. He observed that the meeting had not a word of sympathy, and apparently seemed afraid to express a word of sympathy, with Bismarck. (Cries of "No, no.") Then, at all events, if they were not afraid of it, they very cleverly managed to keep it out of their resolution. He looked for the day when the State and the Church in Germany would be separated from each other; but he was willing to wait for that day, seeing that they had not had in Germany the education which the people of England had had in that matter. He had deep sympathy with the man who was fighting this battle as nobody but Bismarck could fight it. They must remember, while they were pleading earnestly for the separation of the Church and State, that if Bismarck had been rolled in the dust at this great crisis of German history, the Ultramontanes would have triumphed over the whole of that great land. Bismarck's success would be the safety of the Protestantism of Prussia. (Cries of "No, no.") Some of the members said, "No," but he (the speaker) should have considered himself a coward in his own esteem if he did not express his opinion that the meeting had not done justice to the efforts which Bismarck was making. When he referred to the "ultimate principles of Protestantism" he did not mean to sneer at the noble words uttered by Mr. Dale. If he did so, he would be unmindful of the splendid services which Mr. Dale had rendered, and he would entreat him, as he would entreat all that meeting, to remember that in this great crisis on the continent, there were more issues at stake than he had now time to enter upon. He should like very much to propose an amendment, but he did not like to divide the meeting. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. R. W. DALE said he had to thank Mr. Statham for the kind and generous manner in which he had referred to him, and he thought the whole assembly was under a real obligation to that gentleman; in fact, they were always under a real obligation to any man who would frankly explain his own position, and the obligation was greater when that position was not the same as their own. The special service that Mr. Statham had rendered to the assembly consisted in the fact that he had called the attention of the meeting from the principles involved in this discussion as they affected continental States, to the form in which they might affect political life in our own country. It was of great importance that they should form a just judgment on the controversy that was now going forward in Prussia and in Switzerland, but the impossibility of forming a right judgment chiefly arose from this, that, sooner or later, they would have to deal with not dissimilar questions in England. (Hear, hear.) He must be permitted frankly to say that he did not sympathise with the unqualified admiration with which Mr. Statham regarded the policy of Prince Bismarck. There was no difference in this assembly with reference to the right and duty of the civil Governments to maintain themselves against ecclesiastical encroachments, and there was no difference of opinion as to the right and duty of Governments to protect individual citizens against injury from ecclesiastical powers. But now, when the State found itself in the presence of a Church that claimed supremacy in the civil sphere, there were two alternatives, either of which it might adopt. The State might retire within the true limits of its own functions, and might decline to distinguish between citizen and citizen on the ground of their belief, and refuse to subsidise priesthoods or patronise creeds; and having done that, it might arm itself with all the resources at its hand, and declare that if the Church crossed the line which properly belonged to the control of the civil Government, it would be firmly and persistently resisted. On the other hand, the State might subsidise the clergy, and might invest them with civil privileges and authority, and might assume so to organise the Church as to deprive it either of the disposition or power to inflict harm on the civil Government. It might, for instance, resolve to regulate the training of the priesthood; it might resolve to interfere in their appointment to their ecclesiastical offices; and it might limit their right of examination, and so endeavour to protect itself again ecclesiastical aggressions. He believed that, whenever the State attempted to protect itself and its subjects against ecclesiastical assumption, by organising the Church from which it feared aggression, it would infallibly violate the claims both of civil and religious liberty. Prince Bismark had not adopted the first alternative, but he had adopted the second. He had, in other words, adopted that alternative which, as was within the memory of those who had reached only middle age, was the favourite project of a weak party with regard to Ireland. They had said, "Let the State in Ireland be free of all organic relations with ecclesiastical bodies, and then let it defend itself from all comers"; the weak party said, "The Church of Rome is an extremely dangerous power; let us try and have such an arrangement with Rome as will secure friendship for us in the higher ranks of the priesthood; let us educate the Catholic priesthood on Irish soil, and let us not have them sent into a foreign land where their antagonism to Ireland may be increased; and by drawing the whole Catholic priesthood into intimate relations with the State, let us endeavour to make the Catholic priesthood friendly instead of hostile to the English supremacy." Now they had rejected once for all that policy with relation to Ireland; and he believed that any attempt to pursue a policy of that kind, no matter where it was attempted, must be followed by most disastrous results. Mr. Parkinson said that he did not think the policy of Prince Bismarck should be regarded as religious persecution; but it appeared to him (Mr. Dale) that the principle adopted was that religious opinion, of whatever type, should be controlled or manipulated by the State. (Cries of "No, no.") Then they could agree to differ on that. (Laughter.) He regarded it as an interference with sacred rights to prescribe where students for the priesthood should receive not only the general education but the theological education—viz., in a German University where there was a Roman Catholic faculty. It was asserted that there was a Catholic faculty at the Universities of Bonn and Breslau; but could the Government recognise as Catholics those who had been expelled from the Church, and if not, the law involved this—that students must receive their theological training from theological professors who had been excommunicated. Now take a question that affects all the Churches in Prussia. One law provided that no Church should have the right to excommunicate members. What would be said in this country if the Reform Club had not the power to excommunicate members on account of the votes they gave? Or if the Good Templars could not excommunicate any member who voted for any member who would support the Government Licensing Bill. (Laughter.) The Government, he contended, had no right to deprive the Church of the right to excommunicate its members on the ground of any offence for which it might think they ought to be separated from its fellowship. He heard with some dismay that Mr. Statham proposed to expel the Jesuits from England; that they should be taken by the throat and cast out. (Laughter.) If they could prove before the public tribunals that the Jesuits had committed any offence against the law, he would say, "Let them go"; but to exile from England men untried and uncondemned, whatever their past history, would be a foul and flagrant offence against principles which they, as Nonconformists, were bound to maintain. (Hear, hear.)

The Rev. R. MACBETH, in supporting the resolution, said, he should not detain the assembly long, as what he had intended to say had been so much better said by Mr. Dale. Some of their friends seemed to consider that the resolution declared no opinion on the method adopted by Prince Bismarck. He for one had a very definite opinion that Prince Bismarck had given at one time every encouragement to Ultramontanism until it had no longer suited his policy, when he turned round and adopted the recent method which had been alluded to by Mr. Dale. Anyone in preparing for the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church in Prussia must obtain his theological teaching in the manner referred to by Mr. Dale, and during three years he must attend the secular National University, during which time he must not attend or receive any theological training from the teachers of his own communion. That was a treatment which would be intolerable to every one in this country. It would be an abandonment of their rights; and he would protest against the interference of the State with the rights of conscience. He could not run a wild race with Mr. Newdegate and others in glorification of a man who, though with a probable good ultimate result, was fighting towards positions which in this country we had happily abandoned long ago. They would utterly fail to meet the exigencies of the present occasion if they adopted a less definite resolution than that now

proposed. They had been flattered by Archbishop Manning and by a writer in a recent quarterly review, and were encouraged to believe that they had nothing at all to do with this matter; but Mr. Fitzjames Stephen, who was a literary organ of their party, not in his recent article in the *Contemporary Review*, but in his book called "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," declared that, if they had religious earnestness and true religious enthusiasm, they would deal with heretics as a man dealt with a nest of wasps. But were they to abandon their old position and adopt the maxims of this kind? He trusted this assembly would repudiate the idea of becoming inspectors of nuisances in convents and matters of that kind, but whenever these men in any measure overstepped the boundaries within which the State allowed them to act, then let them be dealt with by law. Meanwhile, let them say to Prince Bismarck and all others that this was a *sine qud non* in dealing with priesthoods, whether Ultramontane or Anglican—that these priesthoods must first be severed from that adulterous connection in which they had so long stood with the civil power. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. R. W. DALE said that some alterations had been suggested in the resolution with the consent of the mover, and he would read the resolution as now proposed:—

That this assembly, recognising the gravity of the political difficulties and perils arising from the doctrines and pretensions of the Ultramontane party, now supreme in the Roman Catholic Church, and believing that these difficulties are greatly aggravated by the existence of organic relations between churches, whether Catholic or Protestant, and civil governments, desires to express its deliberate judgment that the civil supremacy of the State, which it is the duty of nations and governments to defend against all ecclesiastical encroachments, and the rights of conscience, which it is the duty of nations and governments to respect, can be securely and permanently maintained only when all organic relations between the Church and State are dissolved.

The Rev. G. W. CONDER said the alteration just proposed in the resolution seemed still to leave the meeting in some difficulty, and it did not satisfy his own mind. Whatever differences they had, they all agreed in one thing, that they did not like to be laughed at. Though the resolution might be intelligible to those who proposed it, they must consider how it would be understood by the public. The resolution as it stood unaltered proposed that the remedy should be "dissolution of all relations between Church and State." That language he contended had no meaning whatever, and if they put it before the public in that shape he thought they would have reason to regret that it had not been otherwise worded.

The SECRETARY said the words intended were the "dissolution of all political relations."

The Rev. G. W. CONDER said the Church could have no political or organic relations with the State, and therefore there were none to be dissolved. A political Church might have political relations with the State, as long as it was a political body, but they could not dissolve relations which did not exist. It was the difficulty of every country, and as a country become more and more free, Roman Catholicism become something more than a religion. The Church of Rome was a Church, and a great deal more than a Church, and with that something more they could not help having political relations; and the political relations depended in this country upon this fundamental difference that, whereas the foundation principle of the English Constitution, and the English history, was liberty, the foundation principle of the Church of Rome was despotism. While the Church of Rome was really a political body as well as a Church based on the principle the very opposite of that which was the foundation stone of English policy, it did seem to him a lame and impotent conclusion to say, "If we dissolve all relations then everything will be right." He should prefer the words, "a clear definition and righteous separation of the Church and the State."

The CHAIRMAN said he was anxious to bring the discussion to a close, and desired to know whether the alteration proposed by Mr. Conder would be accepted by the mover and seconder. (Cries of "No, no.")

The Rev. J. B. PATON said he thought the resolution, as altered by Mr. Dale, would entirely meet the difficulties raised by Mr. Conder. The resolution did not affirm, as the old resolution did, that the civil supremacy of the State in defence of individual liberty could be maintained by the dissolution of all relations between the Church and the State—a phrase which would not only be meaningless but erroneous, and would have surrendered pretty much the liberties which they held to be sacred, to the tyranny of the Church. But the resolution stated that the civil supremacy of the State which guarded those liberties to which Mr. Conder had alluded—the liberties of person, property, and conscience—could be and might be maintained by the State only when organic relations between the Church and the State had ceased. He believed that that alteration would satisfy everyone.

The Rev. Dr. HALLEY, being called upon by the meeting, said that he really had nothing to say, because he did not perceive the exact difference between the two resolutions. (Laughter.) He had no feeling on one side or the other, but he might say he was very glad that this question had come up for discussion, because it was a question that deserved discussion among all classes in the country. He did not quite agree with Mr. Statham, and he did not quite agree with Mr. Dale. (Laughter.) When Mr. Statham talked about banishing the Jesuits, he quite agreed with what Mr. Dale said in regard to banishing men without trial and who had done nothing contrary to the law. Then with regard to the infringement of religious liberty by insisting upon the State educating the priests in Germany; if the priests in Germany took the wages of the State they were the servants of the State, and the State had a right to choose how they should educate their own servants; but to show the absurdity of the thing, Prince Bismarck might send all the priests to Mecca and have them taught by Mohammedans, and then bring them back to their own country to work there. (Laughter.) Therefore, if the Church wanted to be independent of the State, it would be a very easy thing for the priests to say, "We cannot take your wages, and we cannot be your servants or do your work." They might be independent of the Government—if they declined everything from the Government—and then they might simply say to the State, "Deal with us as you do with the grocers, and the drapers, and the ironmongers, take care we do no mischief to anybody, and protect us that no one does us any mischief." Whether that would represent any "relation with the State," he did not pretend to say. (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN said that he quite agreed with Mr. Paton when he condemned Archbishop Manning for endeavouring to show that the Nonconformists were supporters of the Ultramontanes. All he wanted to say now was that, in all fairness, the same condemnation should be extended to the worthy gentleman writing in the *Times* of the previous day, under the *sobriquet* of "Anglicanus," who stated that the Liberationists had accepted what Dr. Manning had said. He must also correct a remark made by Mr. Macbeth, because he could not accept the idea that Mr. Fitzjames Stephen could be in any sense regarded as a representative of a section with which they were in any way identified—for they were just as far from Mr. Fitzjames Stephen as they were from Dr. Manning.

The resolution as altered by Mr. Dale was then put and carried.

THE GROWTH OF RITUALISM.

The Rev. Dr. HENRY ALLON then moved:—

That in view of the prevalence and rapid growth in the Church of England of doctrines and practices closely resembling those of the Church of Rome, this union earnestly calls upon Protestant Nonconformists to meet the danger to which the spiritual life of the nation is exposed by increased activity in inculcating spiritual truth. In particular, it suggests to pastors and Sunday-school teachers the desirableness of such elementary teaching—whether in the form of sermons, lectures, or catechetical instruction—as may serve to protect the people from being misled by religious teachers who misuse the authority and influence with which they have been invested.

He said that any further discussion of religious and ecclesiastical forms would be simply a contribution to the reasoning which would determine the truth. The resolution which he had now to propose seemed to take the same direction, because it directed the attention to those intellectual and spiritual weapons whereby alone they could refute error. In dealing with Ritualism they should endeavour to deal with it with common-sense views, besides merely refuting it within certain limits. It would be impertinent for those who worshipped in one Church to find faults with the dogmas and worship of another Church; but when that Church was an established Church he thought they had very much to do both with its dogmas and its worship. They were all citizens of the commonwealth, and could not be released from their relations to the established Church. They had to do with it in very many ways—for instance, they were part of the constituency which through their representatives conferred the endowment on the Church and regulated the application of the endowment; they had in fact more to say to the question than was stated in the resolution. Allowing everything which could be reasonably claimed for the Romish leaven remaining in the formularies of the Church of England, they must see that the endowments which the nation transferred from the old Church of Rome were used for the purposes of a Reformed Church. They had a right to complain if the dogmas taught by the old Church, and by reason of which the endowment was transferred, were again taught by those to whom the endowment was transferred. Of necessity the endowment ought to be restored to the old Church from which it was taken, or the Reformed Church receiving the endowment ought to be faithful to the principles upon which it was founded. (Hear, hear.) Some of them thought the only correction of the evils in the Established Church was to remove from it the endowments altogether and abolish its connection with the State; for the endowments had been greatly abused, and the fundamental principles on which they were granted had been violated. They thought it right, therefore, that by legislative action or legal process the compact should be enforced; and that, whether by political or religious action, they had also the right to oppose Ritualism in the Church of England. The resolution spoke of intellectual and spiritual methods as the weapons whereby they were to encounter the errors promulgated by the sacramental party in the Church of England. Probably they might take it that sacramentalism prevailed in Great Britain just in proportion to the theological ignorance of the people; for amongst the Scotch Presbyterians and the English Nonconformists, dogmas had made little progress owing to their advancement in theological knowledge. But how were they to account for the prevalence of Ritualism just now? Partly because of the normal tendency of the human mind—the old Jew required his sign, and the old Greek sought for wisdom—and partly because of the special religious feeling which, though long generations had now produced in all classes of society a religious sentiment of greater depth and intensity than at any former period of our history; and this feeling, acted on by priestly men with regularity and perseverance, easily degenerated into superstition. For this reason he lamented greatly the comparative decay of theological knowledge amongst the Nonconformist churches, and he looked with apprehension upon the kind of sentimental sermons which during the last twenty-five years had taken the place of theological discourses. (Hear, hear.) It was true the greater spread of literature enabled them to relegate metaphysical discussions to the press, but he thought that theological truth might be expressed in the pulpit in such a way as to be recognised by those whom they approached. He was not sure about recommending dogmatic controversy in the pulpit and in the Sunday-school; but he thought their greater strength lay in affirming spiritual truth, which was a direct negation of the Ritualistic and sacramentalistic errors which they so deeply deplored. (Hear, hear.)

The Rev. Dr. ROBERTSON, of Cambridge, in seconding the resolution, said there was such an organic unity between this and the last resolution that he could hardly do otherwise than commence with the first one. He was glad a discussion had taken place as to the position of the German Government, because he thought the ventilation of the question would do good. They were indebted to Mr. Dale for bringing forward the point as to the Government restrictions on the education of theological students in Prussia. He thought that some gentlemen might alter their views on the question when they heard that the Protestant students were submitted to the same regulations as the Roman Catholic students; but what would they say if the same restrictions were placed on the free churches in this country? They must be careful not to utter any negation of their free church principles. Whatever others might say, it was one of the proudest boasts of Nonconformists that they had in a great measure contributed to Catholic emancipation in this country, and they would accord equal privileges to any other denomination. (Hear, hear.) In regard to the second resolution, he was glad Dr. Allon had expressed the conviction which rested in his (Mr. Robertson's) mind, that the best plan to adopt would be to saturate the mind of the people with spiritual truths. But it was as much their duty to oppose the sceptical tendencies of the age as to oppose the Ritualism of the Church of England. He had seen something of Ritualism, and it was rapidly increasing.

The Rev. THOMAS ARNOLD, of Northampton, said that part of the battle of Ritualism would have to be fought in the county villages, where it was frequently supported by the clergyman and the squire without any opposing influence. He suggested that the Union would do well to send evangelists to these villages to visit every inhabitant, and meet the enemy on their own ground. Truth, when opposed to error, had always been victorious.

The resolution was then put and carried.

The CHAIRMAN congratulated the assembly on having mustered in such large numbers. He said they had almost been compelled to meet in that spacious chapel, and he was glad to see it so well filled. (Hear, hear.)

The benediction by the CHAIRMAN concluded the proceedings; and the assembly adjourned till Friday, when it will meet at the Weigh-house Chapel.

THE DINNER.

After the morning sitting the delegates dined together at the Cannon-street Hotel. Even the Great Hall was not sufficient for the number, and several had to be accommodated in other rooms. After the dinner the Chairman of the Union gave the health of the Queen, which was responded to with enthusiastic loyalty, and the National Anthem was sung. He then offered a few congratulatory remarks, and introduced as representatives from Canada and Ireland respectively, Dr. Wilkes, of Montreal, and the Rev. Mr. White, of Belfast. The former of these gentlemen gave some information as to the state of Congregationalism in the Dominion, and the latter, in a warm-hearted speech, earnestly insisted that the preaching of the old Gospel would offer the only effectual resistance to Romanism in Ireland. The Chairman then gave some information as to the condition of the Pastors' Retiring Fund, and announced, amidst loud cheers, that it amounted to more than 100,000*l*. Not that that was to be the maximum; more was still wanted; but the success of the effort was magnificent. The Widows' Fund, too, reached to between 16,000*l*. and 17,000*l*. He went on to pay a warm tribute to the labours of Dr. Ferguson in connection with these undertakings, and suggested that the time had arrived for a recognition of that gentleman's services. The Chairman then earnestly pressed the claims of the denominational press, and maintained that although as Englishmen and as Independents, who were English of the English, they might occasionally find fault with it, no periodical literature did more credit to any denomination.

The Rev. R. W. DALE then rose to give expression to his deep and perfect happiness in seeing Mr. Rogers in the position of their chairman for the year, and paid a high tribute to his many excellences of character. Mr. Dale proceeded to enforce the claims of their periodical literature, with special reference to the *Congregationalist*, the editorship of which he had

undertaken from a conviction that it would minister to the higher thought of the churches, and had foregone other opportunities of literary labour in order to devote himself to that work. But the members of the Union might greatly increase its power by extending its circulation. Dr. Allon and Dr. Spence were entitled to their hearty thanks for their labours in the same field, but the recognition to be desired was not so much that of after-dinner speeches as the substantial help he had indicated. After a few remarks from the Rev. JOHN HAYDEN, the proceedings, which were of a very animated character, were brought to a conclusion.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

The annual meeting of this society was held on Wednesday last at Exeter Hall, which was filled. The chair was taken at eleven o'clock by the president, the Earl of Shaftesbury, and on the platform were—the Earl of Chichester, the Earl of Harrowby, the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, the Bishop of Ripon, the Bishop of Victoria, Bishop Ryan, Bishop Anderson, Bishop Harris, from the American Bible Society, the Hon. A. Kinnaird, M.P., the Dean of Chester, the Hon. and Rev. Lord Wriothesley Russell, the Rev. Dr. Moffat, the Rev. W. Arthur, the Rev. Dr. Stoughton, Mr. Joseph Hoare, Treasurer, the Rev. J. C. Harrison, Sir F. Lycett, Messrs J. Pownall, G. Moore, J. Kemp-Welch, T. F. Buxton, J. Finch, R. Freeman, &c. The Rev. Mr. BERGNE opened the proceedings with prayer, and the reading of the 145th Psalm.

The Rev. CHARLES JACKSON read the report. After remarking that the society had now reached the age of threescore years and ten, but that age had no enfeebling effect upon an institution whose mission of mercy is linked with God's purpose of mercy to a fallen world, and with the eternal destinies of successive generations of the human race, the committee proceeded to allude to the foreign operations of the society. In France, the excitement connected with the severe conflict by which she was lately convulsed had now gradually subsided, and many who took a deep interest in the spiritual welfare of the nation had been watching the effect of that discipline through which it had passed to see whether God's hand had been recognised, and His voice heard and obeyed. Certainly there had been no national humiliation on account of sin, no manifestation of Divine power and love had been witnessed in the addition of millions of men and women to the fold of Christ. The work of the society in France had been carried on for many years chiefly by means of colporteurs. Sometimes they were encouraged by evidences of usefulness; but, on the other hand, they often visited localities where education was neglected and superstition reigned supreme. Their number now was fifty-four; their sales during the year had averaged about ninety copies per month per man, and had reached a total of 47,000. In some parts of Paris poverty and distress still prevailed to such an extent, that when ask to purchase the Scriptures, the people replied, "Give us bread for our children"; while in Lyons a colporteur, whose conduct was blameless, had been refused a licence and been compelled to remove elsewhere. The total circulation in France in the year was 98,000 copies, of which 530 were memorial Testaments given to relatives of persons who fell during the late war. There had been another year of successful labour in the German and Swiss field of operation. The issues reported by the Rev. G. H. Davis amounted to 413,000 copies, of which 318,000 were distributed within the limits of his own agency. The sales had exceeded those of previous years by 9,000 copies. Thirty years ago the issues for Germany, Switzerland, and Austria amounted to 37,000. Then the value of the Scriptures sold was 3,000*l.*, now it was 16,000*l.* The people had been supplied with the Word of God to an extent which was unparalleled. The Old Catholic movement was making rapid progress, as might have been expected, since the Word of God was the rallying point of those who refused to recognise the daring pretensions of the Pope. In Austria the year opened with bright hopes and prospects in connection with the pending International Exhibition; but, alas, how different was the reality! There had been no channel through which the streams of Christian philanthropy might freely flow, and a year which commenced in such bright expectations ended in dismal disappointment. Mr. Millard, however, reported a total issue within the year of 176,000 copies. The laws against colportage were still unrelaxed; a fresh petition had been presented to the Reicharath, and Mr. Millard awaited the result with anxiety. No opportunity was afforded for selling the Scriptures within the Exhibition building, but a second depot was opened near it. Bohemia was now beginning to yield some recompense for the care bestowed upon it. Large orders for the Scriptures were received from Roman Catholics, and the New Testament was in general use in all the schools. The condition of Denmark was more prosperous than it had been since the commencement of the present century, and the circulation of the Word of God had had no unimportant share in promoting the vigour of that Christian life which was manifested. Fifty-two years ago a Bible in large type cost 9*s.*; now it might be bought for 3*s.* 4*d.* At the former period the issues of the society were limited to six or seven hundred, now they amounted to as many thousands. In Russia the work had during the last few years advanced with rapid strides. The year 1873 had been rendered memorable in the annals of that society by the completion of the Bible in modern Russ. That translation could not be circulated in Russia Proper, but God would in His good providence make a way for it. It was this translation that the committee had the pleasure of presenting to Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna on the occasion of her marriage to His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh. A new depot had been opened at Moscow, and within two months 7,000 copies were issued from it. The circulation of the depôt at St. Petersburg was 204,767, and that in South Russia 80,015, making a total of 284,782. In the case of Spain eighteen colporteurs had been employed, and the total issue had amounted to 77,000 copies; and if they called to mind how recently the Bible was a forbidden book in Spain, they must feel that they had every reason to thank God that amidst the troubles which had threatened to banish all peace from the land the voice of the Prince of Peace had been heard in many a home and heart. In Italy patient perseverance and simple dependence on the promise of God were the principal qualifications needful for the prosecution of the work of Bible circulation. The facts were sufficiently plain, that as yet vital godliness had made but little progress in Italy, and that those who longed for her regeneration must be content to wait on in faith and hope. Forty thousand copies had been circulated in the year. It was not easy to overrate the difficulties with which the agent at Constantinople had to contend in his effort to distribute the Word of God; but it was satisfactory to find that a larger number of Scriptures had been put into circulation than in any previous year, and that the improvement extended to the whole of the agency, and to almost every one of the thirty dialects in which the Scriptures were distributed. Last year the issues amounted to 29,000; this year they reached a total of 41,000. Although in reviewing the work of the society in British India there was much to fill the mind with sadness, God was no less surely working there through the good pleasure of His will. The Indian auxiliaries had furnished reports which were both interesting and instructive. At Calcutta the committee had memorialised the Government for permission to place the Bible in all colleges and schools—a request which had been readily acceded to—and they were engaged in collecting funds for the erection of a new depôt. At Allahabad the sales were larger, and the contributions more liberal than in any previous year. In the Punjab the sales and receipts were doubled, and the number of colporteurs increased from six to ten. From the Madras depot the Scriptures had been issued in thirty different languages, ten of which were Indian; and the fifty-four colporteurs had visited more than 6,000 towns and villages, and distributed 48,000 copies of the Word of God. The report of the Bombay Auxiliary was full of interest. Under the head domestic, after the usual obituary notice of the deaths of vice-presidents of the society, including that of the Rev. Thomas Binney, the report stated that the following had accepted the office of vice-presidents:—The Earl of Darnley, the Bishop of Winchester, the Bishops of Barbadoes and Trinidad, the Rev. Samuel Martin, and Mr. George Moore. It was added that Mr. J. H. Budgett, whose state of health rendered it necessary for him to retire from the committee, had been appointed an honorary life governor, and that Mr. Charles Flint had been appointed assistant-secretary.

The receipts from ordinary sources for the year ending March 31, 1874, have, it is stated, amounted to the sum of 220,766*l.* 18*s.* 2*d.*, including 119,751*l.* 12*s.* 9*d.*, applicable to the general purposes of the society, and 101,015*l.* 5*s.* 5*d.*, receipts for Bibles and Testaments. To this must be added 90*l.* dividends on stock invested for the China Fund; and 107*l.* 3*s.* 8*d.* on account of Lieut.-Col. Rotburgh's Fund for colportage in India; making a grand total of 220,964*l.* 1*s.* 10*d.* The ordinary payments have amounted to 208,618*l.* 12*s.* 8*d.*; and adding the sums paid on account of the special funds, the total expenditure of the year has been 210,183*l.* 14*s.* 9*d.* The society is under engagements to the extent of 134,041*l.* 9*s.* 6*d.* The issues of the society for the year are as follows:—

From the depot at home . . .	1,467,278	2,654,080 copies of Bibles, Testaments, and portions.
From depots abroad	1,186,802	

The total issues of the society now amount to 71,131,111 copies. In conclusion, the report alluded to the movement for the spread of the confessional, and strongly condemned it as tending to enfeeble and degrade the minds of those who were brought under the influence of such a system.

The CHAIRMAN, after remarking that this was the twentieth anniversary on which he had presided, congratulated the society on the fact that their society alone had issued already close upon eighty millions of copies of the Holy Scriptures, showing that if there were ten readers to each copy, the whole human race being calculated at eight hundred millions, each person might now have a copy in his own possession. This was a subject for deep and holy thankfulness; and he would only pray God that if that society should be permitted to complete its centenary it might be found, not worn nor wearied, but acting in the spirit of God, as lively, as vigorous, as holy, and as true as it was at that present hour. (Applause.)

The Bishop of RIPON, in moving the adoption of the report, congratulated the noble president on having so long occupied that position. He looked upon that society as the handmaid of all that was good and useful both at home and abroad. There was a universality and a catholicity about it which claimed in behalf of that society the support of all those who desired the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom on earth and the triumph of God's truth over every form of error by which that truth might be assailed. (Applause.) There was a growing necessity for union at a time when Popery and infidelity were so rife, and he rejoiced that the report had a thorough Protestant ring. It had been his privilege within the last few weeks to visit the scenes of a missionary society's labours engaged in the special work of combating the errors of Roman Catholicism in Ireland. And the proofs abounded in every quarter where these missions were carried forward, that if only they could once get Romanists to examine the Word of God calmly and dispassionately, and to compare the teaching of that Word with the tenets of their own religious system, they must come sooner or later to the conclusion, that if the Word of God was right, Popery was wrong—(applause)—and that if the system to which they belonged could not be proved to be in accordance with the Word of God, the only step for them to take consistently with their present peace or their eternal safety was to abandon Popery and embrace the Protestant faith. (Cheers.) The report alluded to the important question of religious education. He firmly believed that the people of England, speaking of them as a whole, were decidedly in favour of religious education. (Loud applause.) The outcry against religious education came, for the most part, from those who did not understand the mind of the people of this country. (Applause.) If there was one thing which more than another was needed to sustain and to advance the prosperity of their great country it was to have Bible truth more and more leavening the Senate, influencing families, echoing in all its purity and simplicity from their pulpits, felt in all hearts, and guiding all lives. (Cheers.)

The Dean of CHESTER, in speaking for the first time in London on that platform, said he would earnestly advocate the claims of this society on this ground, that it provided the help which was essential for all other religious agencies, without hindering any one of them. (Hear, hear.) They found it essential in all their efforts at doing religious good to use the Bible; at all events, they should make very sorry work of it if they made the attempt without that book. Thus in regard to foreign missions, nearly twenty of those translations which the two great Church of England Missionary Societies employed could not be found at all unless it were for the efforts of the British and Foreign Bible Society. (Applause.) In fact, the work done by that society supplied, the whole of Christendom, with the means of correcting religious error whenever error arose. It was also a bond of union between different religious communities. He went on to refer to the Old Catholic movement, with which he had been brought into somewhat close contact in Germany and in other places, not only quite recently, but during the last few years. He could furnish them with illustrations of the increased importance which the Holy Scriptures were assuming on the continent in consequence of that movement. This one fact came prominently before the view of all who were acquainted with what was now going on in this matter, namely, that there was an increasing sense of the necessity of the Bible, of the value of the Bible, and of the great harm which resulted from secluding the Bible from the people. (Applause.) He was brought into contact with two of the leaders of this movement—Von Schulte, who had for three years been the chairman of the conferences, and Bishop Reinkens, a man of noble character, of strong and forcible mind, a man of honesty and simplicity. There had been delivered at Constance, since the last anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, a speech in which the bishop said the fact was very often questioned in regard to Roman Catholic countries, whether the people were refused permission to read their Bible freely. He said speaking publicly and under great responsibility, that it was a fact, and one which was becoming more and more conspicuous. He alluded to an archbishop who had said very shortly before that time, that to read the Bible with notes under the guidance of your confessor might be well, but to read it otherwise was a sin. He said he wished to ascertain how it was the Roman Curia had come to the conclusion that it was well to keep the Bible from the people, and so referred to a book published by Cardinal Wiseman, who, he said, thoroughly understood the spirit of the Roman Curia, and acted throughout his life on thoroughly Roman principles. The first argument he quoted from the cardinal's writings was this. That it is evident from the Scriptures themselves that they were not intended for all; and next, that the Christian Church has the instinctive feeling that it is not safe to put the Bible into the hands of all. Bishop Reinkens replied that this must be a mistake, for in the early Christian centuries, until the hierarchy laid its hand upon the treasury of the Gospel, the Bible was regarded as the most precious jewel which the Church possessed; and it was everywhere read in the congregations, and to the congregations it was thoroughly welcome. The cardinal had also said that the apostles were sent forth to communicate not written teaching but oral teaching. To this Bishop Reinkens replied, in a certain sense this is

quite true, but when the apostles did write, transcripts were made of their epistles, and were sent from church to church, and no one ever thought they were intended as a confidential communication to a few. But then he said with regard to this Bible—this Bible is the very thing that does give us the oral teachings of Christ and His apostles, and we cannot get it anywhere else. Thus we have voices from the continent crying out for the careful translation, and free circulation, and the devout reading of the Book of God. (Cheers.)

The Rev. W. ARTHUR, in supporting the resolution, said he believed that all who loved St. Paul had learned to love the Dean of Chester, whose writings had done so much good in edifying and instructing him. He did not know what other doctrine than that of the survival of the fittest would enable them to account for the fact that while all other attempts made in ancient times telling of such things as the creation, the first being, the first act, and so on, had passed away, one Book, having no aid from patronage, and boasting no superiority over those records, had grown and grown with the ages, so that they could now challenge its enemies to say that there was in the world one power to be compared with that of the Bible? (Applause.) Twenty years ago there were many who thought that in twenty years from that time the fact which they had always been proclaiming—that the days of the Bible were numbered—would become apparent to the most purblind. Very well; the twenty years had passed. Was the circulation of the Bible more restricted? were its doctrines more degraded? were its morals less honoured? were its prospects less bright? were there fewer of the nations that valued it or not? (Applause.) He believed that their body (the Wesleyans) was the only religious body in the country which after full discussion had formally proclaimed the old English belief in Bible education. (Applause.) Von Schulte all his school life never had a Bible lesson, but he had religious lessons. Was he not religiously educated? and was it not the policy of those who taught him to exclude the Bible? (Hear, hear.) Let them hold that in sight. The design of the Vatican was to substitute religious for spiritual education; to exclude the Bible, divide the Protestants, and exalt the priests. (Hear, hear.) Now he said—never surrender the Bible, they would have the Bible, and teaching out of the Bible; and let Protestants rally round it as the symbol of their common faith. No priests above us and no Pope above us; the Bible and the Queen, and no other power to be acknowledged. (Loud applause.) He thought the openings for good in Italy were immense, for the Bible could be freely circulated and there were 2,900 Protestants in Rome alone, and the Bible would, he trusted, become more and more the symbol of international sympathy between the great Protestant countries—Germany, England, and America; England standing between the Old World and the New, having ties with both and claims upon both; and in union, not against, but for the world. (Applause.) Africa wants the Bible. The heart of Livingstone was in Africa—(applause)—though the clay of Livingstone laid yonder in Westminster Abbey. "When I saw that clay laid there, and saw the President of the British and Foreign Bible Society following it, and saw the old man magnificent that sits there—Robert Moffat—(loud applause)—I felt as if there was an undercurrent of voices—the voice of the great scientific world, the voice of the historic world and the literary world, that passed swiftly." (Cheers.)

The Rev. T. CHARLES EDWARDS (from Wales), in a fervid speech moved the next resolution:—

That this meeting, on a review of the operations of the past year, desires very devoutly and gratefully to recognise the tokens of Divine goodness manifested to the society in the enlarged success that has attended its efforts for the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, and in the very considerable and gratifying increase that has taken place in the free income; and would appeal to the friends of the society for their continued and liberal support, and for their earnest prayers that the diffusion and perusal of the inspired Word of God may be accompanied in all lands by the illuminating grace and converting power of the Holy Spirit.

It was his firm conviction, and had been for many years, that as long as the Welsh people had the open Bible in their hand, as long as that excellent society continued to do its work among them as efficiently in the future as it had in the past, and was now doing, in bringing the Bible to their cottages and schools and colleges, the result would be that future generations of the Welsh people would be as religious as their forefathers, and the earnestness and simplicity of the past would again characterise their people.

The Rev. R. W. FORREST, in seconding the resolution said they were often told that the Church must be before the Bible. But he contended that the Bible must be before the Church, and if they had to fight over again the battle of the Reformation, their principle would be the sufficiency and the supremacy of God's inspired word, which was more precious than any denomination or any Church, however ancient, however venerable, however Scriptural, however renowned; and if only maintained and acted upon, would do more for the real welfare of England, for her creed, her truth, and her national Church, than ever so many Parliamentary bills, however necessary they might be, or any amount, however excellent, of ecclesiastical legislation. (Applause.)

The Rev. NARAYAN SHESHADRI, who was received with loud applause, said that holy Henry Martyn once remarked that if he saw a Brahmin converted it would be one of the greatest miracles of grace. He trusted they beheld that miracle of grace that very moment. As a Brahmin, he was a person of great importance—a kind of sanctified person.

What could induce me to leave a comfortable position and come over to Christianity? Ah, I must thank Brahminism for that! I was taught that the Lord of the Brahmins drank up the whole of the Pacific and the Atlantic and the whole of the northern seas, and, credulous as I was, this was too much for my credulity. A great doubt was infused into my darkened soul, and that led me to study the whole subject of religion, Hindoo religion, in its most popular forms, and in its philosophic form too. The philosophic form may be divided into two classes, atheistical and theistical. I will not say much of the atheistical form, because it is the fool that has said in his heart, There is no God. But according to the theistical form God has existed from all eternity, not as a personal agent, but as an eternal principle. That eternal principle lies in a state of quiescence, not conscious of its existence, and without life and motion, and it remains in that state for ages, and cycles of ages, and after the lapse of cycles of ages it somehow comes to consciousness, and then says, "I am," and has a volition. The genius of our language would lead us to presume that this eternal principle is a neuter principle. Brahm is a noun of the neuter gender. Well, we ask our great philosophers how this great eternal principle comes to consciousness, and they start with a mystery. Pantheism starts with a mystery. They say this eternal principle comes to consciousness, and then it says, "I am, the great name by which God revealed Himself to Moses," and then it begins to speak of men, women, and children having emanated from this eternal principle, and after the lapse of 8,400,000 years—for they believe in the transmigration of souls—man will return to this eternal principle again. And they say that as the froth of the sea is nothing but a part of the sea, so man and the whole world are parts of the Great Eternal Spirit, and will all get back into that spirit. This is Pantheism. They carry this out to its logical results. Human entity, apart from the Divine principle, is denied, human responsibility is denied, and human accountability. When man commits sin they hold that he does not commit sin. Man's sin becomes God's sin: man's folly becomes God's folly. Now when I came to know this blasphemous system, I made up my mind not to have anything to do with it. Then there was a vacuum formed in this heart of mine, and we in India do not like the idea of being without a religion. However the idea of being without a religion may be favoured in England and the United States, in India if they cannot have a true religion they will have a false one. Then was my heart drawn to that wonderful book, the Book of books, the Bible. (Loud cheers.) On September 13, 1843, I was enabled to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. If I had chosen to be a hypocrite I might have still remained among my own people, but I could not. Brahminism is closely intertwined with the daily life, and it is no easy matter to break off from it. It was very trying in some respects to make the change that I did. I was not afraid of being punished for so doing by my own people, for the protecting arm of Britain extends to India; but I had to give up a loving mother, three brothers, and three sisters, and a large number of first and second cousins, the last named being regarded in India as belonging to the same family as oneself. But the Lord Jesus has said that whosoever will not take up His cross and follow Him is not worthy of Him. I embraced Christianity, and I found many of the precious promises of the blessed Saviour realised in my own case, especially the declaration, "Whosoever forsaketh father and mother, and brother and sister, and houses, and land, hath a hundredfold more in this world, and in the world to come everlasting life." In how many different forms has this promise been realised in my experience in the last thirty years!

The speaker went on to contradict the prevalent idea about the pure morality of Buddhism. The Buddhists in India had taken to worshipping some of the gods that were worshipped by ordinary Hindoos, and especially did they worship a monkey-god, which was said to have brought a mountain on the palm of his right haud, and upon each hair of his body. (Laughter.) In his country they had the Bible in between fifteen and twenty languages, many of which were cultivated languages; so that at this very moment the multitudinous races of India could read the wonderful works of God in their own tongue. When the first pioneer missionaries went to India they were not allowed by the Government to carry on their labours as they desired; now there are no such obstacles to missionary progress. For a country 2,000 miles in length and 3,000 in breadth, and containing a population of 250 millions, there were in round numbers only five hundred missionaries. Send out more missionaries, that the five hundred be multiplied into 5,000; and even that number would be small for such a vast country and population. He was not the only Brahmin who had become a Christian. There were many converted Brahmins who were now employed as ministers of the Gospel, as editors of Christian magazines, as catechists, as medical men, or as Government officers. In the mutiny some of the converts showed that they could die for their religion. India, like England, had furnished Christian martyrs, whose blood might prove the seed of the Church. (Cheers.)

The Rev. Dr. PATERSON moved the next resolution viz.:—

That the thanks of this meeting be given to the president and vice-presidents, for their continued patronage; also to Joseph Hoare, Esq., the treasurer, who is requested to continue his services. That grateful thanks be also presented to the officers, committees, and collectors of the various auxiliaries, branches, and associations throughout this country and the colonies; to whose untiring zeal and energy the society is again indebted for so large an amount of free contributions during the past year; and would earnestly entreat a continuance of their efficient and valuable services; and that the following gentlemen be the committee for the ensuing year, with power to fill up vacancies. [Names read.]

The Rev. Dr. HALLEY, in seconding the resolution, said he wished to refer for a moment to an anniversary meeting of that society which he attended very early in the history of the society, either in 1812 or 1813. The chair was occupied on that occasion by the society's first president, Lord Teignmouth. Many of those who were on the platform appeared in uniform. There were military officers in red, naval men in blue and yellow, and the bishops and the clergy present were also known by their dress. Even the Quakers wore a sort of uniform, wearing such immense hats as are now seldom seen. The chairman read the report himself, and he held he was correct in saying that it was his own composition. The adoption of the report was moved by the Duke of Kent, the father of Her Majesty, and never could he (Dr. Halley) forget the speech in which he said that it was the wish of the King, his father, that there might be no cottage in the country without a Bible, and no child in a cottage unable to read the Bible. (Cheers.) How delightful it would be if the grandchildren of the Duke of Kent were to appear on the platform to testify to the value of Bible circulation! The adoption of the report was moved by another son of the King, the Duke of Sussex, who spoke in the manner of a thoughtful reading man of the value of the Bible circulation, and who, when he died, was found to have collected a most valuable library of Biblical criticism. Lord Gambier spoke in a manner which showed that his heart and soul were in the work, and among the other speakers were the Earl of Harrowby, the father, he believed, of the noble lord on the platform who now bore that name, Charles Grant, Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, one of the oldest friends of the society, and William Wilberforce. The chief opponents of the society at that period were the Pope, the Sultan of Turkey, and the Emperor of China. What was their opposition now? (Cheers.) As for the Pope, poor old gentleman! his power of opposition was now but little. As to the Sultan, the Bible can now be purchased as easily in Constantinople as in Russia; while, as regards China, we have, indeed, reason to thank God for the wonderful work which has been accomplished there, and the openings which are presented for the diffusion of the Gospel in the Chinese Empire. (Cheers.)

The Earl of HARROWBY moved, and the Rev. Dr. MOFFAT (who was loudly cheered) seconded a vote of thanks to the chairman, which having been briefly acknowledged, the Rev. C. JACKSON closed the proceedings with the benediction.

SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

The annual conference of the members of the above Union was held on Wednesday and Thursday last week at the Jubilee Hall, Old Bailey. Sir CHARLES REED presided at the first sitting, and in an opening speech referred to the importance of their work. There was no such organisation in the country, nothing that approached in perfectness, magnitude, or extent, or influence, the Sunday-school organisation. No State, however anxious, could undertake such a work as was being carried on by the Sunday-school teachers. The work was not only supplementary to the education which many parents gave to their children, but it was the only religious education that many children were able to obtain. Teachers gave their services, and children had nothing to pay for their education. The country was indebted to the Sunday-schools for the law-abiding spirit that prevailed so generally among the middle and lower classes. He believed that the system of Sunday-school teaching needed to strike lower, so as to go amongst the very poor children of cities; and also to strike higher, so that the Bible-class instruction could be imparted to the children of the upper classes. Mr. F. J. HARTLEY then opened an interesting discussion upon the subject of "The International Lesson System," in which he traced its gradual adoption in America and the steps taken by the Sunday-school Union to procure its adoption in this country. The speakers generally agreed with the views of the opener, and were unanimously in favour of the International Lesson System. Among those who took part in the discussion were Mr. W. Groser, Col. Hicks, the Rev. S. Green, Mr. Kerr, and others.

The conference was resumed in the afternoon, when Mr. W. H. Groser spoke of the continental work of the Sunday-school Union. This subject also provoked a very animated discussion amongst a number of the gentlemen present. A long statement on the subject was made by Mr. A. Shrimpton. Further details of the continental work were given by the Rev. J. B. Matthews, of Antwerp; the Rev. J. G. Oncken, of Hamburg; and Pastor Truve, of Gothenburg, Sweden.

On Thursday the conference was resumed, Colonel Griffin presiding. Mr. F. R. Blenkarn, of Liverpool, read an ably-written paper on "Country Sunday-school Conventions." A discussion, conducted on "the five-minute system," then took place. Among the speakers were Mr. Hartley, the Rev. Mr. Jellie, Mr. Pallett, Mr. Cooper, Mr. J. T. Cox, the Rev. Mr. Harding, Mr. Weovil, Mr. Curtis, Mr. Featherstone, the Rev. Mr. Barker, Mr. Hullah, Mr. Hall, Mr. Hope, the Rev. J. P. Chown, and others.

The afternoon of Thursday was devoted partly to the reception of reports from country unions. This part of the business having been concluded, the remainder of the sitting was occupied with the answering of written questions on Sunday-school subjects. The questions were collected from all parts of the room, and then handed to Mr. F. J. Hartley, one of the secretaries, to be answered. The responses were then given very readily and

with great ability. This concluded the business of the conference.

THE PUBLIC MEETING.

The annual meeting was held on the evening of Thursday, May 7, at Exeter Hall. As usual the building was densely crowded. Mr. Samuel Morley, M.P., occupied the chair.

Mr. AUGUSTUS BENHAM (one of the secretaries of the union) read some extracts from the seventieth annual report of the union, which stated that it had at work a staff of six missionaries, and that a seventh would enter upon his labours on July 1st next. Growing interest in Sunday-school work was manifested by the Lutheran churches in Germany, the scattered Protestant communities in France, Belgium, and Switzerland, in the small churches in the Waldensian valley, and also in Sweden. The schools connected with the unions in Victoria, Ballarat, Queensland, and Auckland were increasing in usefulness and efficiency. The successful effort of Sir Charles Reed, M.P., against including Sunday and ragged schools in the revived proposal of the Government to repeal "The Exemption from Rating Act of 1870," was gratefully acknowledged. The sales of the society's publications during the year under review amounted to 41,434*l.* 5s. 4d., showing an increase of 2,213*l.* 2s. 2d. During the year lectures and preparation classes had been held in connection with the training classes. Thirty-six grants, amounting to 289*l.* 12s., had been made towards the erection of new class-rooms. Local examinations had taken deep root, and become part of the Sunday-school system. Since their commencement, in 1870, upwards of 2,000 teachers had presented themselves for examination. Of 4,773 papers, 3,129 were passed by the examiners, and 1,111 certificates, in addition to prizes of books to the value of 138*l.* had been awarded. The subscribers to the library and reading-rooms numbered 1,458. The library grants included 238 "Teachers' Own Libraries," and 514 "Scholars' Libraries." A very successful convention of Sunday-school teachers was held on March 24, 25, and 26, at the Weigh House Chapel, and an educational *soirée* was also given to American friends. The increase in the London auxiliaries during the past year was nine schools, 367 teachers, and 6,087 scholars. 80 per cent. of the London teachers and 86 per cent. of the country teachers were formerly scholars. The number of Sunday scholars who were members of churches was reported as 32,174—6,233 in the London schools, and 25,941 in those of the country. The number of scholars who were reported to have joined Christian churches during the past year was, both in town and country, unprecedentedly large, amounting in the London auxiliaries to 2,338, and in the country unions to 8,777, making a total of 11,115, being an increase on the past year of 1,870, and amounting to 13 per 1,000 of the entire number of scholars. The report announced that Mr. William McArthur, M.P., had kindly accepted the presidency of the union for the next year.

The CHAIRMAN expressed the privilege and honour of presiding over that meeting, and of being president of the Union for the year. To those who managed its affairs he entertained respect and attachment, and he believed the institution was managed with great wisdom. The education controversy had thrown upon Sunday-school teachers a greater degree of responsibility. He quite believed that to teach a child the three R's, and to qualify such a child so as to enable him to take his part in the battle of life, was of great value; but then he had clung to the hope and belief that a certain amount of fair, honest Bible teaching should be attached to the secular teaching. He should like to deal with his poor neighbours' children as with his own, and not to entrust their secular teaching to anyone who had not got an interest in their religious education. (Hear, hear.) To the Sabbath-school teachers he was anxious to appeal, and to tell them that their work would be vastly more important than heretofore, in two respects—first, he would venture the opinion that no one was competent to teach a child who was not only a recipient of the truth he or she desired to inculcate, but was in the true enjoyment of that truth. It should be out of the thoroughness of the heart that the instruction should be given; in addition to that, the children taught in the week-day schools were receiving a much better education than formerly, and when they came to the Sabbath-schools they would also need a higher class of teaching; and therefore he appealed to the Sabbath-school teachers to prepare themselves more earnestly for their future work. (Cheers.) He did not wish to reflect upon the work of the past, but he wanted to say earnestly to the young men and young women that their work would require more care and more preparation if they were to keep up the intellectual tendency of the present day. As a result of extensive observation in many parts of the country, he could not help noticing and regretting that there was something like a gulf existing between the Church and the School—(Hear, hear)—and he trusted that the managers of schools and others would use their utmost endeavours to explain away the difficulties that were felt upon that subject in many quarters. In that room were represented an army of 300,000, probably all Sunday-school teachers, who were every Lord's-day doing their very best to raise the minds of nearly 3,000,000 of children. He did not know of any institution in the kingdom that appealed to anyone more on patriotic grounds as well as on those of Christian love for the people, and he joined with those who had expressed an earnest desire that God's blessing would rest upon the labours of the Sabbath-schools of this country more than ever. (Loud cheers.)

The Rev. PAXTON HOOD said that now that secular education was cared for by the State, they (the teachers) should remember that they were set apart to care for and minister to the souls of children. There was no apology for turning aside from that work—the power of their souls should be brought to bear upon the souls of the children. He then urged upon the teachers in Sunday-schools to increase and improve the accommodation provided in the schoolrooms, as some of them were in a disgracefully dilapidated condition. (Hear, hear.) They should be made attractive and beautiful, and the men attached to churches should be called upon to give their assistance, pecuniarily and mentally. The men of culture should be called upon to give themselves to the class of the Sunday-schools, and to make that the attractive means of combining together the young men and young women in the work of the union. (Hear, hear.) The culture of the teacher ought to be raised; although beyond all it was necessary to have faith, prayer, and love; but men, like bullets, went farthest when they were smoothest. (Laughter.) He believed that the brightest days of both Sunday-schools and the union were yet to come, for those who took part in that work lived in the invisible. It was the invisible that kept alive that great king of men that had just been borne to rest in the hallowed abbey. ("Hear, hear," and cheers.) Nor had his lamented death been less instructive than his life was inspiring. "Not what I have done, but what I am able to look up to." So were they to measure themselves; and so look at the successes of David Livingstone, who had died just as he was within reach of the object of his consecrated life. After an allusion to the death of Austin Holyoake, and the lesson to be learned from it, Mr. Hood concluded by moving the first resolution:—

That this meeting desires to express its thankfulness to Almighty God for the enlargement and improvement of the means provided for the daily instruction of the children of this country, and for the results already attained thereby; and would at the same time record its deep conviction that the advantages thus secured will tend to enhance the necessity and importance of maintaining and extending the Sunday-school system as eminently calculated, under the Divine blessing, to train the youthful population of our land in the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus, and in obedience to His revealed will.

The Rev. MARK PEARCE seconded the resolution. There was something strangely uniting, he said, in Sabbath-school work. The resolution referred to the increased growth of the work and usefulness of Sunday-schools, and he could not help testifying to the value of the assistance given by the female sex in the glorious work. The first thing that was now required of a Sunday-school teacher was that he should be converted. (Hear, hear.) They needed the conviction that they had taken the work from the Lord. He looked upon them as ministers, and they could look down and laugh at the priests who boasted that they had their authority from the apostles. God, before the time of the apostles, gave the command for a Sabbath-school Union, when He commanded that the little children might be brought together to fear the Lord their God. (Cheers.) He hoped that they all might have the spirit to carry out their work.

The Rev. V. J. CHARLESWORTH moved the second resolution, which was as follows:—

That this meeting, rejoicing in the reported accession of 11,115 children and young persons from the connected schools of the union to the ranks of the professed followers of Christ during the past year, earnestly commends to the prayerful consideration of pastors, superintendents, and teachers, the subject of youthful discipleship, in its development and manifestations, and of the means by which it may be fostered and directed.

The resolution spoke of 11,000 children having been added to the ranks of Christ's followers. That return, great as it was, should not be accepted as the total increase for the year; there were thousands of little children, whose piety it was difficult to determine according to the conventional usages, and there were perhaps many more who had failed to satisfy demands of the examiners, because of the immaturity of their experience. He had seen children of whose piety those who knew them best had not the slightest doubt, and yet he had seen those children put back and frowned upon by the deacons of the church before whom they came up for examination. It was monstrous to expect a child to be other than child-like, simply because he had become a Christian, and it was cruel to ignore the piety of a child because it was not exaggerated into an artificial unreality. (Hear, hear.) A truly Christian boy might shock some of his seniors were he to be detected leaping a ditch or playing at marbles, and a Christian girl might provoke a frown from some, were she to confess her love for skipping; but they might be good Christians notwithstanding. (Cheers.) In many instances the piety of children had been ignored, simply because they were devoted to their games; but a child might be a true Christian without being able to fix the precise moment when his heart was given to God. It was unsatisfactory to test a child's piety by demanding a detailed account of his experience. Children were also bored with such questions as, "Are you prepared to die?" and "Would you not like to die?" &c. He had known instances of children actually committing some wrong act, being under the idea that if they were very good they would die and go to heaven; they, of course, naturally did not wish to die in their childhood. He would ask all his brother teachers and ministers not to be too exacting when they had to sit in judgment upon little children. (Cheers.)

The resolution was seconded by Pastor TRUVE, of Gottenburg, who traced the foundation of Sunday-schools in Sweden. He said that in 1851 a Swede came to London to see the Great Exhibition, but he also visited a Sabbath-school, which left such an impression upon his heart that when he returned to Sweden he got together thirty children and organised a Sunday-school, which was the first opened in Sweden. (Cheers.) But Sunday-schools were much opposed by clergymen of the State Church, who could not endure that the teaching of religion, which they claimed to belong exclusively to them, should be taught by ladies, and they did their utmost to stop the Sunday-schools. That was only part of the opposition which the work of the Sunday-schools in Sweden met with. But notwithstanding these hindrances—the fining of teachers and sometimes the hostility of the authorities—the work had so progressed that six unions had been organised, and one of which had sent out a missionary who was organising new schools in different parts of the country. (Cheers.) The reason why it was possible to do so much in Sweden was because so much assistance was given by England—the books and papers that were published in England could be obtained in Sweden. And besides that, the union had also aided them greatly. He took the opportunity of thanking them all for the good they had done to Sweden. As to the fruit of the labours in Sweden, they were perceptible, and could be shown. In one place during six months as many as fifty had been added to the church, most of whom had been taken from the Sabbath-school. Shortly before Christmas he had received many letters from children, who said that during the days of prayer appointed by the union they had been spiritually benefited. By the institution of Sunday-schools the Christians in Sweden felt that they had something to do. Formerly, belonging as they did to a State Church, they were not allowed to take any part in the work of the Church. They now felt it a joy that they could work and instruct others, and in that work themselves be taught.

Colonel HICKS, of America, moved the third resolution:—

That the meeting rejoices to hear of the success which attended the first London Convention of Sunday-school teachers, held at the Weigh-house Chapel on the afternoons and evenings of March 24th, 25th, and 26th, and of the devout and earnest spirit which pervaded all the proceedings, and considers that the holding of such conventions periodically could not fail to exert the most salutary and stimulating influence on Sunday-school work throughout the metropolis and its suburbs.

Reference (he said) had been made in the report to the success of Sunday-schools in America; and as he was familiar with the growth of Sunday-schools in America, he could say that so far as they had improved the improvement was due chiefly to the holding of Sunday-school conventions. As a result of these conventions held in the States, the churches generally had been roused to the work, and the amount of Sunday-school work had been greatly increased, and the quality of the work had been higher. It should not, however, be forgotten, that although so many modern improvements were possessed, the spiritual results desired were not attained. That fact suggested that the measure of a teacher's knowledge was not the measure of his success. (Cheers.) Where the teaching of religious truth was done simply as a task, it always had and always would fail. It was necessary that a teacher should have the spirit to learn himself as well as the spirit to teach.

Mr. ASHWORTH (of Rochdale), who seconded the resolution, said he felt thankful, when contemplating the present scene and its associations, that there was in London such an institution as the Sunday-school Union, that had sent out its aid east, west, north, and south; and he should say that there was perhaps not a single school with which they stood connected that had not received considerable encouragement from the Sunday-school Union. He was an old Sabbath-school teacher, having been in the school for forty-five years—(cheers)—and ever since he was a child of five years of age; and he was very glad that a speech had been delivered on the proper way to treat children. If he had come to London simply to hear that speech he should have been satisfied. He knew what it was to be associated with children; but he could not tell how he loved those children. He believed in children coming early to Christ, and he believed that they had emotions of piety and simplicity, which sometimes it would be well to endeavour to copy. He knew what it was to look over the old roll-books, and it was one of the most melancholy moments of his life to do so, and ask where they were gone. He knew the reason why thousands had been swept away from the Sunday-schools; one cause was that 100,000 public-houses were open. The Sunday-school teachers of England would have to look that question directly in the face. (Cheers.) 100,000 public-houses open on the Lord's-day was a disgrace to this country. It was robbing the churches, and demoralising the youth of the country to an appalling extent. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. GROSER said it was not the desire of the chairman to have a vote of thanks passed; but he (the speaker) was sure the meeting would thank him heartily for presiding. The assembly responded with acclamation, and the proceedings then terminated.

The nomination at Stroud will take place this day, and the polling on Friday. The nomination for Dudley has been fixed for to-morrow, and the polling for Monday next.

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The Nonconformist.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 1874.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*** The large edition of our last number having been inadequate to the demand, the entire report of the Conference and Public Meeting of the Liberation Society, carefully revised, is published as a "Special Number" of the *Nonconformist*, and will be sent by post on the remittance of three penny stamps to the Publisher.

SUMMARY.

IN a little more than a week Parliament will have closed the second of the three periods into which the session is divided, and it has already been notified that the House of Lords will adjourn on the 22nd for the Whitsuntide holidays. This holds out a poor prospect for the Primate's bill for enforcing discipline among the clergy of the Established Church, which was read a second time on Monday, and committed *pro forma* last night for the introduction of amendments. The Licensing Bill has also, with general approval, been postponed till after the holidays, and it is believed that the Government will offer no serious opposition to a proposal for recalling the extra half-hour after midnight allowed for drinking, which it appears the public do not want, and the trade is somewhat indifferent about.

As might be supposed, Mr. Disraeli's Government are not willing to retire from the Gold Coast region—at least for the present, and last night Lord Carnarvon announced the scheme which had been matured by the Cabinet. The Gold Coast is to be separated from the administration of Sierra Leone, and with Lagos is to be constituted a separate colony with a Governor and Legislative Council, either Elmina or Accra being the capital. The settlement is to be defended by a native force under a few English officers, and roads are to be constructed for commercial purposes. The Colonial Secretary hopes—though he gives no solid reasons for the anticipation—that the King of Ashantee will be disposed to enter into alliance with us. It is clear that the Protectorate will be a costly encumbrance, and will offer few countervailing advantages. We trust this ill-omened proposal will be well discussed when it comes before the House of Commons.

On Friday evening Mr. Kay-Shuttleworth originated a very interesting discussion on the housing of the labouring classes of the metropolis. He proposes to find some sort of remedy for the frightful evils of overcrowding, by investing the Metropolitan Board of Works and the City Corporation with authority to purchase, clear, and resell sites, with limited powers of rebuilding. Sir Sydney Waterlow calculates that by the levy of a rate of a penny in the pound, good and adequate accommodation could be provided for the working-classes of London; and if that could be made perfectly clear, probably the ratepayers of the metropolis would not object to the additional burden. However, Mr. Cross announced that the Government were endeavouring to frame a measure in the spirit of Mr. Kay-Shuttleworth's suggestions, and that it would be introduced as early as possible, "with the full intention of carrying it." This would, indeed, be a great social reform, the carrying of which would reflect lustre on Mr. Disraeli's administration.

The important announcement was made at the anniversary meeting of the Church Missionary Society last week that, partly with a view to discountenance High-Church schemes, the directors had resolved altogether to withdraw from the island of Madagascar. This is a very creditable decision. A bishop has been appointed with the sanction of the heads of the Church of England—who have most discreditably succumbed to a small clique of Sacerdotalists—but without the co-operation of the Church Missionary Society it is hardly possible, should he proceed to Antananarivo, that he will long remain there. Was there ever an exhibition of sectarianism on the part of Nonconformists which could match this proposal for sending a bishop to Madagascar, without a diocese or converts to watch over?

It is lamentable that nine months after signing the treaty for the suppression of the slave-trade on the East Coast of Africa, it should be necessary to hold such a meeting as took place last night at Stafford House, to devise fresh means for putting an end to the traffic in flesh and blood which has greatly revived in those regions. Sir Bartle Frere himself was present to express his profound regret at the partial failure of his mission to Zanzibar, owing rather to the inherent difficulties of the problem than to the bad faith of the Sultan—the slave-trade being carried on by Arab slave-dealers upon the mainland beyond the sphere of his jurisdiction, and with aggravated horrors. Whether the revived traffic can be best extinguished by increasing the naval squadron on the coast, by influencing the local rulers in that region, by stimulating legitimate commerce and forming trading settlements, or by all combined, is a matter for grave consideration. But it is certain that a philanthropic work so worthily commenced cannot be allowed to be frustrated by a band of greedy and heartless Arab traders. This is a great opportunity for the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, the annual meeting of which is to be held on the 21st inst.

The foreign news of the week is very scanty. The French National Assembly met yesterday after a long recess, but there will be no political strife till the bills for restricting the franchise and the creation of a Second Chamber—the former opposed by the Republicans, the latter by the Legitimists—are introduced. A very stormy session is expected.—The Prussian Parliament has passed, by a large majority, the bill relative to the administration of vacant bishoprics, and before long we may hear of the exile of at least four of the Roman Catholic prelates whose fanatical adherents have, according to Professor Sybel, gone the length of assuring credulous people that Prince Bismarck wishes to become Pope, and that the Pope is to be dragged to Germany and disembowelled! It is expected that the four bishops at present imprisoned will voluntarily resign their sees in order to avert the seizure of diocesan funds.—In the Austrian Reichsrath the ecclesiastical bills are hardly opposed; the bishops relying upon the hope that when these bills become law they will not be rigorously enforced.—The King of Holland, one of the most popular of European Sovereigns, has been celebrating his jubilee amid universal rejoicings, which have been heightened by the close of the troublesome Acheenese war in Sumatra.—The operations of the Spanish national forces against the Carlists have been suspended owing to the necessity of accumulating stores and provisions for the new campaign. While General Concha remains in the north to follow up his recent successes, Marshal Serrano has returned to Madrid to prevent political troubles. The Carlists may still make an obstinate resistance in the Basque provinces, but the ultimate suppression of the rebellion is only a question of time.

THE CZAR'S VISIT.

IF previous arrangements have been adhered to, as in all probability they have, the Emperor of all the Russias will have landed at Gravesend an hour or two before this journal will be in the hands of our readers. When we say that the Czar will receive a cordial welcome from the British public, we are conscious that we do but utter a stereotyped formality. His Imperial Majesty will, doubtless, be treated with that outward show of respect which is due to the eminent position in the system of European government which he sustains. Personally, however, he has claims upon the hospitable regard of the English people. It has happened to him to have been our foe, not from his own choice, but as inheriting the legacy of war bequeathed to him by the Emperor Nicholas. Since the conclusion of peace he has, even to the extent of danger to his throne, laboured, and laboured successfully, to put an end to serfage in his dominions. He is the father of the Duke of Edinburgh's bride, and it is mainly to see his daughter that he has come amongst us. With wise consideration for the convenience of his hosts, mingled, it may be supposed, with some regard to his own ease and freedom, he has preferred to forego the ceremonies of a State visit, and to pay his respects to the people of this country in the capacity of a private individual. That he has any political objects in view does not appear to be suspected. That some political results may flow from his appearance in our midst is not altogether unlikely. On the whole, such part of the British public as may interest itself at all in the arrival and the temporary stay of the Czar, may find reasonable and sober ground for greeting him with respectful homage, while to the great bulk of the population his visit will be looked upon as merely a primary item of daily news.

Imperial and royal visits in these days are losing something of their exceptional importance. The Sovereigns of Europe are gradually taking to themselves peripatetic habits. We do not wonder at it. Still less do we wonder that, for the most part, they should desire that their progress through foreign lands should be denuded of as much State formality as possible. The monotony of a Monarch's position can hardly be otherwise than intolerable; and to be an autocrat, ecclesiastical as well as civil, so far from exciting envy, may well stir the emotion of pity in other minds. To be alone, to remain alone, to feel alone, even on the summit of the loftiest earthly authority, whilst it may minister to mortal pride, cannot but be terribly suppressive of the ordinary affections of humanity. We can quite sympathise, therefore, with the modern restlessness of Sovereigns, displayed in their forwardness to seek relief in travel. They cannot wholly put off the cumbrous formalities by which they are hedged around, but they can relieve themselves of the most oppressive of them by temporarily quitting their own territories, and passing through countries the people of which owe them no allegiance. They must be sensible, one would imagine, of a refreshing change of moral atmosphere. In the course of their migration they get a little nearer to the free sympathies of man. They probably learn some useful lessons for themselves, and, in a modified but somewhat higher sense than that in which the words were spoken by the exiled duke, may say

> Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
> Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
> More free from peril than the envious court?
> . . . . . .
> This is no flattery—These are counsellors
> That feelingly persuade me what I am.

The highest peaks of society must occasionally be left in order to enjoy that intercourse with fellow-men which every heart, Royal or Plebeian, eagerly yearns after.

For the most part, it is not much that high and mighty potentates see when on a visit to their neighbours. Their hosts try to make perpetual sunshine for them. They are not permitted to gaze upon the shadows of life more than can be helped. They are tired with garish attractions. They are compelled to take part in glittering ceremonies. They learn but little even of the superficial traits of the people whom they visit. Their ears are stunned with explosions of artillery, and with the noise of multitudes. They are dragged to military and naval reviews, to court and civic fetes, to crowded theatres, and to various places of public resort. We admire the Emperor Alexander II. in that, so far as lay within his power, he has beforehand eschewed these things. He comes to see his married daughter, her husband, and their relations. There is no reason to doubt that his principal motive is to indulge his fatherly affections. The Imperial family of Russia are well known for their love of domestic life. For all these reasons, the Czar's visit will be more interesting to the English people than such events ordinarily are; and, unless we greatly err, the wish with which, and the spirit in which, he has made himself our guest, will command for him that measure of privacy and comparative seclusion for which he has made known his earnest desire.

As we have already intimated, it is possible that political results of a beneficial kind may be indirectly produced by the Emperor's presence in this country. There is no suspicion, so far as we are aware, of even a probability of secret negotiations. Some questions of a delicate character, as it is well-known, obtain between England and Russia, relating more especially to Eastern policy. It is just possible that such questions will be made the subject of free conversation. The main advantage, however, to be looked for in this direction from the Czar's visit, will spring out of that increase of mutual confidence and good-will which it may be reasonably expected to promote. International policy, it is true, is rarely shaped by the personal intercourse of Sovereigns, but it is of no trivial importance to the settlement of difficulties that discussion should be preceded and attended by a strong desire on both sides to arrive at an amicable agreement. Russophobia is not so prevalent a complaint at the present time as it was a quarter of a century ago, but, mild as it is in its characteristic symptoms, it may be hoped the event upon which we are commenting may exercise upon it a mitigating influence. Our Eastern Empire is thought by many to require wary walking. Perhaps, the recent interchange of courtly amenities between Russia and England, followed up as they now are by the Emperor's visit to his daughter's home, may increase the prudential caution of

our statesmen against giving way to a policy of suspicion.

THE NEW LIQUOR BILL.

THE Government are already beginning to discover that it is much easier to criticise the policy of their opponents than to frame one of their own which shall be generally acceptable. They were raised to power by the votes of disaffected publicans who confidently anticipated that the new occupants of Downing-street would at once proceed to remedy all the grievances they had sustained at Lord Aberdare's hands. *Aut Cæsar aut nullus.* The brewers and publicans are now the Cæsars of this kingdom; and they are determined to exact from their subjects on the Treasury benches the uttermost farthing of the tribute which they believe to be their due. It turns out, however, that one little difficulty stands in the way of this bold attempt on the part of a selfish interest to dominate over the nation. The nation, in spite of the feeling of apathy which has temporarily crept over it, is not disposed to submit to the dictatorship of "Sir Jasper" and "Sir Boniface"—the drink-makers and drink-sellers of a country which groans under the misery inflicted upon it by the excessive use of intoxicating liquors. Whether Mr. Secretary Cross will succeed in wiping off the liability which his party have incurred to their new masters, remains to be seen. If he does not, he will probably realise the fact that the power that made can also unmake; while, on the other hand, if he yields too much to the exactions of a triumphant faction, he will assuredly divide his own party, and excite the mortal hostility of the whole of the non-tippling section of the community.

Of Mr. Cross's bill it may be justly said that it unsettles many things without settling anything. He extends the hours of closing in the metropolis from midnight to half-past twelve o'clock. He divides the provinces into two sections, fixing the hour of closing in towns of over ten thousand inhabitants at half-past eleven, and in smaller places at eleven; thus enabling the country publican to keep open an hour or an hour and a-half longer than he is permitted to do under the present system; but, at the same time, the invidious distinction between publicans and beershop-keepers is made more glaring by the latter being compelled to close half-an-hour or even an hour before the aristocratic section of the trade. Beer is called "the national beverage," but the apparent object of the bill is to secure to gin the place now occupied by the more homely liquor. It is true that in London the exceptional privileges accorded to fifty-four night houses are to be abolished; but we believe that the good which the removal of this nuisance is calculated to effect is infinitely outweighed by the evil that must infallibly be produced by the extension to public-houses generally, of the privilege of keeping open for half-an-hour after midnight. The other features of the bill are equally in favour of the relaxation of the traffic. At present the minimum penalty for a breach of the terms upon which the publican's license is held is twenty shillings, but hereafter this may be reduced to any smaller amount at the discretion of the magistrate; and moreover, that functionary will no longer be bound, as he now is, to endorse the licence with a record of the conviction. The publicans are also relieved from "the galling yoke" of police espionage; and in spite of the villanous compounds which are often sold in the guise of beer and spirits, a clean sweep is made of the adulteration clauses of Mr. Bruce's Act, and the publican is placed under the general law of adulteration, which hitherto has notoriously failed to grapple with this class of offences. It is true that the bill presses hard upon the beershop-keepers and the peripatetic vendors of strong drink, who engage in unpleasant rivalry with local dealers by resorting to races and fairs; but, on the whole, the measure is something more than a step—it is a long stride—in the direction of that reactionary legislation which the licensed victuallers claim at the hands of the Government as the price of their support. Mr. Cross says that his object is to throw the trade into the hands of respectable persons. To a small extent he may succeed in doing this by getting rid of those restrictions which, it appears, deter the better class of tradesmen from becoming tavern-keepers; but if his bill passes into law, we believe experience will conclusively show that he has greatly weakened those safeguards which are called for in the interest of sobriety and order.

But after the debate on Monday night it may well be doubted whether the Conservative majority is pliant enough to do the minister's bidding. That dull talk which meandered through a long and tedious sitting, was exceedingly useful in disclosing the fact that in spite of the public-house clique, "loquacious, loud, and turbulent of tongue," the voice of common sense and patriotism has been able to make itself both heard and felt in the House of Commons. If we had been asked to state what in our judgment was the principle of the bill, we should have pointed particularly to the concession made to outside clamour by the proposed prolongation of the hours of sale. Mr. Cross, however, denied that the bill contained any principle at all; while Sir H. Selwin-Ibbetson, with no doubt a painful recollection of his honourable antecedents as a legislative reformer who had succeeded in making the liquor laws more stringent, significantly remarked that the question of the hours of closing was one which could be settled in committee. The House took Ministers at their word; but why this unexpected flexibility of temper? The truth is that since bringing in their bill they have discovered that the country heartily approves of the early closing of public-houses—that the system has worked to the satisfaction of everyone responsible for the peace and good order of the community. Member after member got up on both sides of the House to confirm the testimony of magistrates, clergy, and police as to the beneficial results of the innovation introduced by the ennobled but much-abused Mr. Bruce. Mr. Melly's facts and figures were irrefutable; and the conclusions to which he arrived were sustained by the emphatic opinions of Conservative politicians like Mr. Forsyth and Mr. Hermon, who both deposed to the good effects of early closing. We are not surprised that Sir Wilfrid Lawson should have held his tongue, and that the second reading was allowed to take place without a dissenting voice. The real battle will now be fought in committee, but we doubt whether a majority of the House of Commons will be found willing to make those alterations in Mr. Bruce's Act which are least defensible on grounds of public policy. Why should the comfort of the people of London be sacrificed to the supposed convenience of a handful of theatre-goers? The absurdity of altering the law from considerations of this kind will be manifest to those who remember that every theatre contains its own refreshment room, and that in all well-conducted houses the performances close soon after eleven o'clock. Surely we are not prepared to turn the town topsy-turvy to enable pleasure-seekers to drink and carouse when they ought to be in bed and asleep?

MR. ROGERS'S PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

IT was a robust and vigorous address that was given by the Rev. J. G. Rogers at the meeting of the Congregational Union yesterday. Mr. Rogers had chosen a happy subject—"Nonconformity as a Spiritual Force"—and he treated it with remarkable breadth and perspicuity. Dr. Watts once remarked that Nonconformity was nothing if it was not spiritual, and although we might dissent from that declaration, it is certain that it has been by spiritual force, and by spiritual force only, that Nonconformity has achieved its present position. "Character," Emerson says, "always tells in the long run." It tells against wealth, against talent, and against social influence, and it invariably conquers. It is character, coming out of spiritual force, that has told for Nonconformity; that has achieved for it all its victories, and that will win its unquestionable future predominance.

Mr. Rogers, at the opening of his address, made a graceful reference to Mr. Binney. It was character that gave to Mr. Binney his remarkable influence over his fellow-men, and it was character that gave their influence to our forefathers. A happier expression was never made than that by Mr. Rogers in reference to our Nonconformist descent, when he said, in relation to those who have gone before us, "It may seem paradoxical, but it is nevertheless true, that we have all the more right to regard ourselves as successors of those men because of the very differences which are adduced in disproof of our claim. We claim descent from them, not because we slavishly abide by all they set up, and believe all the articles of their creed; but because we obey the same impulses by which they were moved, and develop the same law of theological and ecclesiastical progress of which they were such distinguished examples." The fact is, that we are, to our own age, what they were to their age, just as the Church is to the present generation, with all its outward reforms, what it was to our forefathers—an incongruous and utterly unsuitable expression of the Christian religion. Our relationship to the ideas of our own age, is exactly what the relationship of the ideas of our forefathers was to their age. Hence our descent, and hence the prophecy of our victory. They were the "forlorn hope" of religious tolerance, just as we may seem to be the forlorn hope of religious equality. In this respect, the past has not extended over us—at least we hope not—the "spell" to which Mr. Rogers refers. There are some, of course, amongst us, who are the mere slaves of their ancestors, just as there are some who are slaves of the letter of the Gospel instead of its spirit, and of its form rather than of its power. There will always be such men, ruled by "dead hands," and governed by tradition instead of by conscience, but that, we take it, is not, after all, the characteristic of the Nonconformity of the present day. Nor do we think that we want "another Moses" to deliver us from "another Pharaoh." We are slowly delivering ourselves; and is not that much better than being delivered? What is doing it? It is the very spiritual force which is the subject of Mr. Rogers's address. What keeps the Church in chains? It is the want of that spiritual force which has given to us our own glorious liberty.

Mr. Rogers spoke with great power and acuteness—as he would be sure to do—upon the state of the Established Church, a state that no arts of rhetoric can possibly exaggerate. When he remarked that in proportion to the success of the Act of Uniformity had been the decay of spiritual life and power in the Church, he struck upon a truth that is rooted in the deepest spiritual principle, and that has no little application to the questions of the present day. So, when he remarked that the success of the Free Churches was mainly due to the spontaneity and freedom of their action, combined, of course, with the faithful preaching of the Gospel, he put the obverse truth. As he splendidly said, we have no power but "soul power," and it is our glory that we trust only in the weapons of a spiritual warfare. There are some, however, who perhaps will not follow Mr. Rogers throughout his application of this spiritual force to the condition of modern society. That application was characterised by great breadth of treatment and, as it should be, by equal intensity of feeling. It was applied with great force to the Papal and the Ritualistic demonstrations, and it is quite true, as the orator said, that the Free Churches could meet these foes with advantage by an unqualified assertion of liberty. "Unqualified"—that is the question, for almost every man has a qualification for himself. If, however, Mr. Rogers had said only the one sentence in relation to this subject, which he did say, he would not have spoken in vain. It was this: "The creed which profits a man is not that which he holds, but that which holds him."

What a contrast there is in this manly and exuberant address to the bishops' charges and the Convocation speeches! Here there is no reliance upon human creeds, upon human laws, upon outward supports, but upon nothing but spiritual force. That force is reckoned to be sufficient to conquer Our own form of it may not be perfect, or we may manifest it imperfectly, but as Christ's freemen, if we unfalteringly obey Him, we must win, only we must be true to all truth, and be willing to give up, without hesitation, all obvious error. That is how "spiritual force" has worked with us, and through us hitherto, and in Mr. Rogers' words we can only say, "Thou art the Truth, make us faithful!" faithful as our own ancestors were faithful—faithful as we must be, if the only force we possess—spiritual force—is ultimately to conquer.

SKETCHES IN PARLIAMENT.

(From a Correspondent in the Gallery.)

During the first few weeks of the new Parliament the Irish members were so unexpectedly quiet that people began to think the fears which beset the minds of those having real business to discharge in the House were imaginary, and that "the phalanx" was to be as silent as it was "solid." The events of the last fortnight have, however, proved the fallacy of the hope. The grievance of the Home Rulers has been

> The torrent's stillness ere it dash below.

And, the leap having been taken, we are now in full enjoyment of the swish and roar and life of the stream. To tell the truth, the apparition of the Irish members in force is not an altogether unwelcome phase of the new Parliament. It is a relaxation from the severe labours of legislation, and a relief from the dreary list of notices of motion about the thickness of armour-plates on ships of war, the need of a new post-office at Llanfair,

fechan, &c. But it has the considerable disadvantage of manifesting itself at untimely hours of the night, and of unduly keeping honest folks out of their beds. From half-past four till, say, half-past eleven, the business of the House has been progressing with decorous dulness. At half-past eleven Sir Colman O'Loghlen rises to "call attention" to the fact that the petition against the return of Mr. O'Donnell, M.P. for Galway, is to be heard by Mr. Justice Lawson, who, it appears, lies under the accusation of being one of the Commissioners under the Irish Church Act, and also one of the Lords Commissioners of the Great Seal; or Mr. Smyth endeavours to induce the Government to introduce the Forbes-Mackenzie Act into Ireland. Then the very atmosphere of the House seems to change. Energy succeeds to lassitude; loud voices ring through the Chamber; and cheers, laughter, and cries of "No, no!" "Hear, hear!" and "Divide, divide!" follow in rapid succession.

In these debates, of which we had one on Thursday, and a second on Friday, the Saxon does "justice to Ireland" to the extent of believing that her sons are capable of carrying on the debate by themselves. The interposition of English members in such debates is a rare exception. A fair field is afforded to the Home Rule party to abuse anybody (including each other), and it is only after the encounter has raged for an hour or two and is growing tedious that pressure is exercised to bring it to a conclusion. In the debate on the motion with reference to Mr. Justice Lawson, the business of Supply was postponed till it was too late to enter upon it. But though the motion was not seriously meant, and the supporters even declined to divide on it, no word of complaint was heard, and on Friday several of the best hours of the night were again given up to an equally unsubstantial attack on an existing arrangement. On this occasion the House was rewarded by the second appearance of the O'Gorman, who received an ovation which must have rather surprised him. He scarcely reached the height of sublimity when he took the House by storm on his first appearance a week earlier. But he was very good, and is now an established favourite, to whom anyone, save perhaps Mr. Disraeli, rising at the time, would be compelled to yield the *pas*.

There was on Thursday another palaver about the state of the navy, starting from the text of Mr. Ward Hunt's foolish speech about the "dummy ships" or "paper fleet." On this day the Supplementary Naval Estimates were issued, and it thence appearing that 150,000*l.* was the full sum the new Ministry felt bound to ask for in excess of the estimates proposed by their predecessors, it was naturally to be expected that a parting shot should be fired at the blustering First Lord of the Admiralty. When the debate on armour-clad ships had droned along for an hour, with the contrary speeches from the admirals and Mr. Samuda, Sir William Harcourt lounged in among the naval critics, taking his place in their ranks as naturally as did Saul fall in among the prophets. Sir William made a brief speech, which would have been better had it been shorter. At any rate it served its purpose in piercing the epidermis of the elephantine First Lord of the Admiralty, who, amid signals of polite surprise from the Liberal side, declared that whatever he might have said, he had not meant what had been gathered from his former speech on introducing the estimates, and that he had never intended to ask for more than 200,000*l.* (now reduced "by good management" by one quarter), in order to re-establish the navy.

On Friday there was some talk about the Stroud election. Mr. Charles Lewis, who is not the man to let the House forget his existence, was greatly shocked by the evidence of corrupt practices which the trial of the petition before Mr. Justice Bramwell had elicited, and in his zeal for the Commons' House, moved that no writ should be issued till the shorthand writer's notes of the evidence and the judgment was in the hands of the members. Some ingenious argument followed on the part of the lawyers, from which it appeared there was quite as much to be said, and with equal erudition, on the one side as on the other. There is a charming scene in *Great Expectations*, where Mr. Jaggers is questioning "the man in velveteen with a fur cap" as to what the witness he has suborned is prepared to swear to? "Ayther to character," replies Mike, 'or to having been in his company, and never left him all the night in question." At the last moment of Friday's debate Mr. Disraeli came forward as a witness to the character of Stroud, and proving more acceptable than the "murderous-looking, tall individual in a short suit of white linen and fur cap," whom Mike walked past the window, as a witness for the approval of Mr. Jaggers, Stroud got off, and the writ was issued.

On Monday night the House got early into debate on the Licensing Bill, Mr. Melly opening the question by a resolution which condemned the Home Secretary's scheme forasmuch as "it affords increased facilities for drinking," and "deals unequally and unfairly with a considerable branch of the liquor-trade"—to wit, beerhouses. Early in the debate the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department was put up to declare that the Government were not prepared to insist upon the hours of closing named by Mr. Cross when introducing the bill. Whatever it pleased the committee to decide upon the Government would endorse; in fact, Mr. Disraeli is determined, come what may, to be (in a Parliamentary sense) Vicar of Bray. This politic arrangement, of which we have already had indications in the Ministerial manner of dealing with the Irish Fisheries and with the Factory Acts Amendment Bill, of course took all the life out of the debate. But it nevertheless dragged itself through many hours, and was interesting chiefly as showing how little real enthusiasm there is on the Conservative side for the cause of the publican. Lord Aberdare was present during the early hours of the debate. Had his lordship stayed it out, he could not have failed to have been pleased with the testimony that came from the Conservative side as to the beneficial results accruing from the bill with which his patronymic will always be associated. In the end the resolution was withdrawn, and the bill was, amid Ministerial cheers, read a second time.

CHEAP MEAT AND GOOD MEAT.

How long it will take to familiarise the majority of the English people with the good qualities of meat other than their own, we do not know. They do not seem to be aware now, that their beef and mutton is very often neither English nor Scotch, nor even Welsh, but comes from almost every country on the continent; and they certainly do not know that the meat sent to us from Australia contains all the nourishing qualities of the best English and Scotch meat, and that it is an ignorant prejudice that prevents it taking the place of the dearest home supply. Mr. Tallerman and his Company are doing their best to convince the nation upon this question. Yesterday they invited a number of gentlemen—many of them men of the highest eminence in the medical profession—to inspect the newest specimen of imported Australian meat. About 100 persons, therefore, met together in one of the lofts at Bankside, Southwark, the approach to which was by two considerably steep ladders; the whole building being just of the sort that Captain Marryat or Charles Dickens would have delighted to describe. In the top loft there were three plainly-laid tables upon which were served the newest of Australian importations in the way of meats. Seven specimens were submitted before the company, but before that was done Mr. Tallerman referred to the old objection of Australian meat having seemed to be over-cooked. That is and always has been a good objection, but we are obliged to say that to most of the meats supplied yesterday, no such objection could have been taken. The peculiar stringy appearance of these meats was almost entirely absent. While we say this, however, we are also obliged to say that, with one or two exceptions, the flavour was not improved. The best meat put upon the table was unquestionably the boiled corned beef, which equalled any cold salt beef that we have ever tasted, and perhaps the next best was the "Scotch collops," to which especial attention was directed. The collops are good—very good,—and they are the best form in which Australian mutton has yet been imported into this country. The "potted head"—so easy to do—was a comparative failure; in fact, you could not tell it from the spiced mutton, but that arises simply from defective preparation. Cold mutton chops also were not so palatable as they should be; but cold mutton chops are never very palatable. What is wanted with most of these meats is heat and good gravy; as for their nourishing qualities there can be no doubt. In fact, from the manner in which they are prepared, that they are actually superior to most English meats. We tasted all the joints, and give our preference to the boiled corned beef and the Scotch collops, and more especially to the former. Good Australian jams of peach and quince were on the table, and the quince was delicious; but the peach was too much sugared, or perhaps sugared with brown sugar, which is destructive to the flavour. There was a fair Australian wine, "Carbinet," also exhibited, which commanded general admiration, and certainly, for a perfectly pure wine, it is cheap at 30*s.* a dozen. The viands well tasted, the chairman of the company made a few remarks, and afterwards several visitors spoke, the principal being Dr. Lord, Dr. Hardwicke, and Mr. Lloyd Jones. This exhibition certainly indicates an improvement in the manner of supplying the Australian meats, and the improvement was highly appreciated by the assembled company.

RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY.

The seventy-fifth anniversary of this excellent institution was held at Exeter Hall on Wednesday evening, the platform being occupied by a number of ministers and influential laymen. Sir Charles Reed, who was to have presided, being detained at the school board, the chair was temporarily occupied by Sir Thomas Chambers. After singing and the offering of prayer by the Rev. L. B. White,

The CHAIRMAN addressed the meeting. Having read a great deal of the report, he could tell them that it contained a large mass of the most interesting material, and there probably never was a time in which the society had greater reason to congratulate itself upon good prospects than it had at present. Referring to the reason of Sir Charles Reed's absence, he said that it was probable the passing of the National Education Act would bring multitudes of persons within reach of the agency of the society—persons who could get no religious instruction worth mentioning in the form of literature, except that supplied by the Religious Tract Society and kindred agencies. The friends of the Religious Tract Society might sit in Exeter Hall at the annual meeting, and thank God and take courage that there had never been a period in the history of the society, or of the world, when the mighty agency of printed words was brought so powerfully to bear upon such an innumerable multitude of persons as it now was. Contrast the first anniversary with the seventy-fifth, and was there any question that they ought to thank God that all this was not only being done to a greater extent, but with more marvellous effect, year after year? The basis on which that society started was the basis from which they had never departed. Scripture truth, as understood by those who had established this institution, guided the deliberations of the committee, and determined the character of the publications now issued by the society and in its name. He could speak himself from personal knowledge, having attended the committee very frequently, as to the intense care given to that particular object. (Cheers.)

Dr. DAVIS then read an abstract of the report. It stated that there had been issued 410 new publications, of which 137 were tracts, containing, with the reprints, 654,697,240 pages. The total circulation for the home depot had reached 44,802,660, being an advance of nearly 2,000,000 on last year. The total circulation, including issues from foreign depots, was 54,802,660, and the total since the formation of the society 1,537,800,000. In France, evangelical religion was spreading in its National Reformed Church, and the work of Mr. McAll and other labourers in Paris was attended with remarkable success. Grants had been made to eighty applicants in France. The Paris Tract Society had reprinted 275,000 old and new tracts, and had issued 21,000 volumes. The Toulouse Book Society had also done much work of the same kind, and had received contributions of 60*l.* from the Religious Tract Society, and 50*l.* from an English lady. In Belgium, nineteen libraries had been established in Sunday-schools, and twenty-six tracts issued. In Switzerland the Genevan Evangelisation Society had provided 68,458 religious almanacs for its colportage movements in France, and 34,000 tracts had been circulated. In Italy, Spain, and Portugal, the circulation of books and tracts was increasing. In Holland, 47,450 tracts had been distributed, principally at fairs. In Norway, Sweden, Russia, Austria and Hungary, Bohemia, Syria, Greece, and Turkey large numbers of publications were being circulated. In India, anti-sceptical lectures had been published in English to counteract English sceptical literature freely circulated amongst natives acquainted with the language; 134,382 books and tracts had been circulated, chiefly vernacular. Similar work was being done in many other places in India. In China, at Hong Kong, the "Pilgrim's Progress" had been reprinted, and other works were in the press; 29,000 volumes were issued from the depository; and at several other places large numbers of publications had been circulated. The society had made grants of libraries, tracts, and paper to various colonies and foreign countries, also of money for special publications.

	£	s.	d.
The total receipts, including balance from last year, were	137,705	7	11
Total payments . . .	136,079	14	3
Balance at bankers . . .	£1,625	13	8

The largest foreign money grants were 2,502*l.* 18*s.* to Germany, and 1,105*l.* to India. Grants of printing paper to Madagascar and India cost 1,186*l.* 1*s.* 2*d.*, and grants of publications to foreign countries and colonies amounted to 2,886*l.* 15*s.* 3*d.* Home grants to Great Britain and Ireland amounted to 13,666*l.* 1*s.* 11*d.* Adding the various grants to European and other countries, the total was 25,979*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* The receipts from every source amounted to 22,328*l.* 11*s.* 7*d.* There was, therefore, an excess of grants over available receipts of 3,651*l.* 1*s.* 9*d.* Having read the abstract of the report, Dr. Davis said that the committee were trying to bear their part in fulfilling the last command of the Redeemer to His Church. They were endeavouring to turn men away from the idolatry of false gods to the glorious

promises of the Gospel; and they addressed their publications to childhood, to youth, and to manhood. Looking to the visible effect of their efforts, they might be tempted to complain; but none could tell how many a fainting soul had been invigorated by the unconscious influence of a godly book. They believed in the resurrection power accompanying the truth, and instead, therefore, of moaning over present apparent failure they looked forward, and laboured joyously till the prospects of faith should be realised, and the kingdoms of this world should become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. (Applause.) Dr. Davis then moved a resolution adopting the report, and appointing certain officers for the year, which was carried unanimously.

The Rev. J. McCONNELL HUSSEY, addressing the meeting on Christian literature, said that it could be wished that nothing was issued from the press but what was an echo of the glorious Bible. But there was a literature which was disseminated broad cast which contained an enormous amount of dangerous trash, and other which was downright vicious. Lord Shaftesbury had said there was no greater danger that threatened them than the poisonous literature of the sensational character which was spreading over the whole surface of society. The *Contemporary Review* says:—"All the garbage which belongs to the history of crime and misery is ranked together to diffuse a moral miasma through the land." In a paper read at one of the Church Congresses the titles of some of these pernicious books were given: "Tyburn Dick, or the Boy Highwayman," "The Boy Pirate," "The Boy Detective," "The Boy Brigand," "The French Jack Sheppard," "Confessions of a Ticket-of-Leave Man," "The Black Highwayman," "Spring-heeled Jack, the Terror of London," and "The Boy King of the Smugglers." These were some of the titles, and there could be little doubt of the pernicious power this literature exercised over the young. The *City Press* said these works sent scores of boys to prison ever year. (Hear, hear.) The chaplain of Newgate in conversation with young people brought to the prison had discovered that the first impulse to crime was from the reading of these books, which cast a kind of halo round the biggest villain and make him appear a noble-hearted man. If they had such books as these, the call upon them was to find the antidote, and to drive out that which was pestilential by that which might be beneficial. There was also a kind of semi-Popish literature against which they must raise up the standard. These were the evil influences they had to contend with, but he thanked God the good and true were doing their best to resist it. They had their Christian literature, and that showed that the Church was awake, and that they had many true philanthropists and genuine patriots who remember that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Those who sought to advance education felt it their duty to supply material upon which the educated might feed with benefit to themselves. Milton had written upon the power of books, and Thomas Carlyle had said, "Of all priesthoods, aristocratic and governing classes at present extant, there is no class comparable from its importance to the priesthood of the writers of books." The priesthood of books was a ubiquitous priesthood, and could always be at the side of the person who desired the service of the priest. The pulpit and school stood at a disadvantage in respect to books, which could speak at all times and in all seasons. For these reasons he thought everyone would admit the importance of Christian literature and the duty of patriots to do their best for its advancement. The Religious Tract Society had set itself to this important work. It published that which was strictly religious; and that which might be called secular was hallowed with a Christian spirit. The Tract Society they were advocating that night was seventy-five years old, and had plenty of energy and vigour in it. It had never deviated from the key-note, "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," and had echoed that glorious truth throughout the world. Its one great aim was to help and elevate the whole human family. He might almost say that the Religious Tract Society was the mother of his theological opinions. It was, therefore, no wonder he spoke earnestly in its behalf. All kinds of people and all ages, were met by the work of the society. He said, then, God speed to the Religious Tract Society!

The Rev. JOSEPH EDKINS said that the missionaries in China felt profoundly grateful for the help they had received from the Bible and Tract Societies, and they could not get on without them. They had to do with a very learned class of people, who invented printing several centuries before it was known in Europe, and who had honoured literature for thousands of years, and in proceeding with their missionary operations they had to go with books in their hands. He and other missionaries had been working in the north-eastern provinces of China, and 1,800 converts had been baptized. (Applause.) Considering the nature of the difficulties they had to contend with in China, that might be called a considerable amount of success, and they would not have had that success without the support of the Religious Tract Society. The publications of the society, above all the Bible and the "Pilgrim's Progress" were much read in China. It was delightful to him that that great preacher, John Bunyan, should still be teaching after being so long dead. They had the "Pilgrim's Progress" in China from the hands of one of the most distinguished missionaries who ever went out to a heathen country to spread the Gospel of Christ—William Burns. (Applause.) He translated that and other books in his latter years, when he sought tranquillity after the active service of his earlier life. They had the Bible, but it is without comment or preface. They could not get on with the Bible alone, and must have the help of the publications of the Religious Tract Society. A Chinese scholar once came to ask him why it was there were three names short in the list of the kings of Judæa among the ancestors of our Lord. He had compared the first chapter of Matthew with the account of the kings of Judah in the Book of Chronicles. There being such men in China, it was well for the Tract Society to provide books to explain these things. Another difficulty was that the name of Jesus, if we honour Jesus, should never be mentioned. They never mention the name of Confucius, and were a printer to print it he would be liable to punishment. It is a crime for a Chinese to mention the proper name of his father or of his teacher. But no missionary had consented to a restriction not to mention the name of Jesus. The Incarnation was a difficult thing for the Chinese, and the Atonement they could not believe in. The crucifixion they looked upon as a mean death to have been died by the person whom we believe in as the Son of God. It was therefore for them to make books to exalt the glory of the Redeemer. China was a nation where idols abounded. They came from India, and the Buddhist religion which brought them had recently, by some writers, been lifted to a higher position than many believed it deserved. Of the two religions believed in in China—the Confucian religion and the Buddhist religion—he preferred by far the Confucian, which maintained the principles of eternal morality. The great battle of the missionary conflict would, he believed, be finally fought in China, although it has often been said it would be in India. When the battle had been fought, and the Confucian and the Buddhist religions tumbled down, that would be a great triumph for Christianity. (Cheers.)

The Rev. W. B. CARPENTER, speaking of France, Spain, and Italy, said it was a great satisfaction to find that the operations of that and kindred societies were making real progress amongst the great Latin races, and all the more so, because something like a taunt had been flung out by an eminent historian, that Protestantism could never take anything like a deep root in the Latin mind. In the report a denial was given to that proposition; and the auspices to be drawn from the past promised progress for the future.

The Rev. J. P. CHOWN, of Bradford, took India for his subject. He said that twenty-four years ago Carey, Marshman, and Ward commenced the circulation of religious literature in India, and that circulation had gone on increasing year by year, and he gathered from the report that from the first commencement till now about 10,000,000 copies of religious works had been circulated by the society in India. The tracts were eagerly received by the natives, and in many instances they flung themselves down and entreated that a tract might be given to them. That showed an appreciation of the work that could scarcely be surpassed in any country. The increase in the sales of the works was an assurance of the interest the natives took in them, and a guarantee of the use they were likely to make of them. The meeting knew that the publications of the Religious Tract Society were all on the side of truth, and for the advocacy of Christ and the Gospel, and they might rejoice in the circulation of publications such as those in India. They had there the "Pilgrim's Progress," "Jessica's First Prayer," the "Dairyman's Daughter," and "Young Jane the Cottager." The missionaries preached, and so did these tracts preach with a simplicity never to be mistaken. They cost nothing for their subsistence, and were never troubled if any great opposition was brought to bear against them. It was impossible to remember such missionary agencies as these in that great and glorious land without feeling that there was a power that any thoughtful man could look upon with feelings of gratitude and devout acknowledgment for the past and earnest confidence for the future. (Applause.) Cross Napaule, one of the first converts in the days of Carey, Marshman, and Ward, a noble man, a preacher who took his stand before Juggernaut when it required more nerve to do it than at the present day, was converted to God by a tract. In the *General Baptist Magazine* for this present month of May there was a portrait of one of the most powerful native preachers God had given to India, and he was brought to God by the perusal of a tract. It would be easy to multply cases, but it was not necessary. Let them learn the lesson that was taught, respond to the call, and go in and take possession of the power within their reach, and to the Lord be the glory. (Applause.)

The Rev. Dr. PATERSON, whose subject was Germany, Austria, and Hungary, said, more than a quarter of a century ago he had read Puritan literature in the form in which it was presented by their society, and his love for the literature had grown with his growth; and he owed that love to the Religious Tract Society. He then heard that a Malay in the Indian seas had boarded an American vessel, and the first thing he asked was whether they had any tracts or religious literature. "What do you want tracts for?" said the captain. The Malay said, "I want them in the way of business. When any one comes to deal with me, I present him a tract, and if he takes it seriously and looks at it, I am sure he is an honest man. If he swears and throws it down, I will not have any dealings with him." He would only speak generally with regard to Germany, and could state that eleven years ago he had seen tracts distributed in Hamburg, and being curious to notice what became of them, had seen numbers of people seated in the park where they were given away, diligently perusing them. The gift of a pamphlet or tract often afforded an opportunity for commencing a conversation on religious matters, which would otherwise be a difficult thing. They heard a great deal about German philosophy, but they need not despair when they remembered that Christianity in its earliest days, with greater odds to contend against than it had now, really overwhelmed all the philosophies of men. He admired the Religious Tract Society because it circulated in Germany—that hotbed and source of philosophy—the simple Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing would bring down Dagon but the Ark of the Lord. Salvation through the blood of Christ, regeneration by the Spirit of Christ—simply because these were the truths of theif publications, their work would be most full and complete. (Applause.)

Sir CHARLES REED, who had arrived some time previously, now rose, and was received with applause. He said that the report of the society for this year was one of the most remarkable he had ever read, and he hoped the day was coming when reports would be more earnestly read. They would find from that report that the Religious Tract Society generously helped all good agencies with sound Christian literature, and from his own knowledge he could say that no organisation connected with religious work was carried on with more earnestness, more perseverance, or more intelligence. The society had adapted itself remarkably to the wants of the times. He had seen the *Leisure Hour* upon the top of Mount Washington in North America. McClintock told him it was the chief companion of his sailors in the Arctic Ocean. The *Leisure Hour* was in every part of the world. The *Leisure Hour* and the *Sunday at Home* had circulated during this past year something like eleven or twelve millions of copies. And these two publications were issued by one society, carried on by the agency of Christian gentlemen—clergymen and laymen together—who united for the one great holy common purpose, sinking minor differences, and declaring that in these publications there should be the truth as it is in Jesus, and that these publications should be sown broadcast all over the world at the cheapest possible rate, and in the best possible style of production. He could only wish that the work of this society might be better known, and that their friends in the churches of all denominations would come and assist that great institution. The time, the pain, the energy spent upon this work was wonderful. There seemed to be an impression abroad that the society did not stand in need of money. This was a very wrong impression; the society needed all the money it could get, and it used all the money it received to the very best advantage; and he was quite sure, if the Protestant public only knew what work was carried on by that institution, that they would greatly enlarge its resources, and would come and support the committee when they meet there to report on the good work that was carried on. He was quite sure, looking at the great changes going on around them, and at the great necessity there was for the promulgation of pure literature, that this work, by God's blessing, would be greatly increased; and wherever man was found, and wherever they could translate into the language of man these truths, they desired that the productions of their society may find their way, through the numerous agencies already at work in connection with the Christian societies of Great Britain and America. (Cheers.)

The usual vote of thanks to the chairman was passed, and a hymn and the benediction brought the meeting to a close.

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The annual meeting of this society was held in Exeter Hall on Tuesday last week—the Earl of Chichester in the chair. The annual report showed that the total income for the past year had amounted to 261,221*l.* 1s. 9d., including legacies and gifts of upwards of 53,000*l.* The expenditure during the same period had amounted to 186,118*l.* 5s. 10d., and after investing 64,695*l.* 8s. 10d. there was a balance in hand of 10,407*l.* 7s. 1d. The society had 158 missionary stations, 207 European and 147 native clergymen, 2,564 laymen, teachers, and catechists, and 22,471 communicants. It was stated that with regard to the present aspect of Christianity in India, the Hindoo worship was still firmly rooted, and the missionaries had great work to do in expunging false doctrines from the minds of the natives. In Africa the greed of the slavers was a vast difficulty in the way of teaching the Bible, but in various other parts of the globe great obstacles had been surmounted. In view of the consecration by the Episcopal Church of Scotland of a missionary bishop for Madagascar, and proposed operations there under these episcopal auspices, the society has resolved to withdraw altogether from that island, desiring not to have any part in a work which savoured of ecclesiastical rivalry, or building upon another man's foundation. These expressions of catholicity, which were echoed by various succeeding speakers, were very enthusiastically applauded. Jacob Wainwright, Dr. Livingstone's faithful attendant, was on the platform, and the hall was filled by a highly-respectable audience.

Literature.

EASTERN AFRICAN MISSIONS.*

The two works before us are very dissimilar, but each bears with more or less directness upon the same subject—the civilisation and Christianisation of Africa. Mr. Forbes's work is a clear and rapid summary of African travel just suited to those who cannot read the larger works upon which it is based. All that has been done to open Africa to the knowledge of other continents is carefully detailed, with large sympathy with the work and with its main object—to extend the religion of Christ throughout the nations of that great land. The more that our knowledge of the natives is increased, the more do difficulties vanish, so that what once seemed to be impossible seems now to be almost easy. Where the great travellers of this country have gone others will now go, and we cannot doubt, that, in a few years, missions will be established amongst many of the tribes of whose very existence we have only lately learned. The interior of the continent, we now know, is inhabited by millions of human beings all of them more or less susceptible to Christian influences, and capable, in course of time, of being elevated to a high standard of morality and religion. Livingstone, who knew them best, spoke the most favourably of them, and wrote, after long acquaintance, "One of the "discoveries I have made is that there are vast "numbers of good people in the world," while of the industry, sobriety, and natural intelligence of some tribes he speaks in the highest terms. To the value of Christian missions to them he bore, too, the most constant and unwavering testimony, declaring that "even the indirect benefits which result "from the diffusion of Christianity are worth "all the labour and the money which have "been expended to produce them." Such a declaration, even if it were unaccompanied by others, counterbalances all the tirades of men like Mr. Winwood Reade.

While Mr. Forbes's work will assist to increase the interest in African travel and missionary enterprise, Sir Bartle Frere's small volume will attract especial attention to the condition and the claims of Christian missions on the Eastern coast, of which Zanzibar is the principal town—that Zanzibar from which Livingstone started on his last journey, and from whence we have just received his remains. The town is the main point of departure on the east, to the interior, and Sir Bartle Frere's object is to strengthen the Church of England missions already established there, as well as to urge the increase of missionary stations in other localities. The broad Christian statesmanship which has characterised Sir Bartle Frere throughout his distinguished life is to be recognised in these pages. He knows more than most men what Christianity can do and will do with the worst and most unpromising materials. There is an utter absence of sectarianism both in his spirit and in his purpose. He recognises the fact that just as much good is being done by other churches as by his own, but it is natural, as it is natural with all of us, that he should wish his own church to take the lead in the great work which can unquestionably be done in Eastern Africa, when the right men shall be found to undertake it.

This book, which is issued in the form of four letters to the Archbishop of Canterbury, gives, first, a brief sketch of the races inhabiting the East Coast and the immediate interior, with their religious condition. Of the native Africans, Sir Bartle says that they "have, so to "speak, no fixed belief, but a multitude of bad "habits and baseless fears. They have absolutely no inheritance of knowledge either in "morals or creeds, but ample power to acquire "such knowledge when presented to them; "and the few who have a chance of profiting "by European or Asiatic education seem quite "as apt scholars as the ordinary run of children in other continents." There is not much Christianity amongst them, but in certain districts a great deal of Mohammedanism, the reason being that Mohammedanism has been, while Christianity has not been, taken to them. Of the Islam religion he writes:—

"As regards Islam, there can be no doubt it spreads wherever the Arabs go. It is a great step in advance, as compared with the indigenous native African superstitions, and tends to raise its converts in the social as well as the moral scale. But it does not appear to me that in East Africa, any more than in India or Egypt, it is an advancing religion in the same sense or to the same degree as Christianity. From a variety of causes there has been during the last generation a kind of revival, which has multiplied the missionaries of Islam, and they have much success wherever the ground is unoccupied or feebly held by any other creed. . . Among the uncivilised negro tribes he may always be sure of a ready audience; he cannot only give them many truths regarding God and man which make their way to the heart and elevate the intellect, but he can at once communicate the Shibboleth of admission to a social and political communion, which is a passport for protection and assistance from the Atlantic to the Wall of China. Wherever a Moslem house can be found, there the negro convert who can repeat the dozen syllables of his creed, is sure of shelter, sustenance, and advice; and in his own country he finds himself at once a member of an influential, if not of a dominant caste.

"This seems to me the real secret of the success of the Moslem missionaries in West Africa. It is great and rapid as regards numbers, for the simple reason that the Moslem missionary, from the very first profession of the convert's belief, acts practically on those principles regarding the equality and brotherhood of all believers before God, which Islam shares with Christianity; and he does this, as a general rule, more speedily and decidedly than the Christian missionary, who generally feels bound to require good evidence of a converted heart before he gives the right hand of Christian fellowship, and who has always to contend with race prejudices not likely to die out in a single generation where the white Christian has for generations been known as master, and the black heathen as slave.'

The writer, however, considers that on the East Coast, as in India and elsewhere, the Mohammedan religion bears all the marks of a decaying creed, which has no chance of success in propagating itself save among "people but "little removed from barbarism; and that as "an aggressive growing religion, capable of "making conquests in civilised as well as uncivilised communities, the power cannot be "compared to that exhibited in our own day by "Christianity." Well, what is done—in a systematic manner—to propagate Christianity? Hardly anything at present. We are told of all that is done. There is a Roman Catholic mission at Aden, there is the Universities' at Zanzibar—small and languishing—there is also a French Roman Catholic mission at Zanzibar, which has been conducted with considerable energy and success, there is the Church Missionary Society's mission at Monbassa, which was established by Dr. Krapf, and a United Methodist mission, of which Messrs. New and Wakefield have been, for some years, the heads. What are these amongst so many? It is not wonderful that Sir Bartle Frere should feel that all has not been done that should have been and could be done on the vast tract of country between the lake region and the sea coast. "The population," he says, "at least six "millions, are within easy reach from the East "Coast, ready to trade, ready to learn; well-"inclined towards the white man, and only too "ready to follow his lead, whether for good or "evil; everywhere recognising the English-"man as the friend and protector of the negro "race."

Sir Bartle Frere's practical suggestions as to what should be done in the direction of missionary extension are exceedingly valuable, and characterised, as one might be sure they would be, by great common-sense. He would have the Christian missionary an agent of material and social civilisation as well as a preacher of morals and religion—to be, in fact, what Dr. Moffat was at Kuruman, and what Mr. Ellis and his successors have been at Madagascar—not mere clerics, but men as well as clerics. He lays great stress upon the value of medical training, and of a knowledge of trades, of school education, and upon the principle that the Christian missionary should neglect nothing which is necessary to the organisation of a perfectly civilised Christian society, "which holds good everywhere." In fact, he should be a man not only of piety, but, as the Americans say, of "faculty." Many detailed suggestions are made in relation to these points, as well as to what is especially required by the Church missions, which all who are engaged in missionary work would do well to read. The practical wisdom and power of organisation which Sir Bartle Frere brought to bear upon his Indian administration are shown here, and it should be no slight satisfaction to us that such powers are consecrated to the service of Christianity.

We should add that Mr. Forbes's work contains an admirable map of African exploration, and that Sir Bartle Frere's volume is also accompanied by a good illustrative map.

* *Africa: Geographical Exploration and Christian Enterprise.* By A. GRUAR FORBES. (Sampson Low, Marston Low, and Searle.)
Eastern Africa as a Field of Missionary Enterprise. By the Right Hon. Sir BARTLE FRERE, &c. (John Murray.)

REMINISCENCES OF SCOTTISH CHARACTER.*

Ministers, as a class, have perhaps in no way weakened their power for good more than by disregard for, and even professed dislike to, the livelier and more humorous side of human nature. Yet it has its place, and a large one, in the economy of life, and there is no use in trying to eliminate it. Rather the wise will address themselves to it, control it, and try to lead it into right channels. The men who have aimed at this, and have in their degree accomplished it, have done more for the cause of religion than most of their austerer brethren. This is doubtless the main reason why Guthries and Spurgeons, Macleods and Binneys, have such a hold on their fellow men—they, more than others, recognise and give free play to the humorous and anecdotic, and they gain accordingly in their serious appeals, for they attain a relief which cannot otherwise be gained, and which is attractive to the wide varieties of character and temperament that the Christian speaker has ever in view to win. Dean Ramsay, amongst Episcopalians, is a notable instance of this power. With no very brilliant intellectual gift, he was pre-eminently sensible, *canny*, kindly, and he made up for much that he lacked in his relish for pure entertainment and the faculty of illustrating principles by a story or anecdote. There is little likelihood that his sermons will be much read in future times—and, indeed, he knew his own powers better than to publish many of them—but to few books has been accorded the success that has attended his "Reminiscences of Scottish "Character," of which we have now before us the twenty-second edition. And its influence has been only in such directions as are at least accessory to the chief aim of the Christian preacher. Some may not think so, and they may not agree with these words which the dean inserted in the preface of the edition of 1865; but we need hardly say that they have our hearty endorsement:—

"I am convinced," he there wrote, "that everyone, whether clergyman or layman, who contributes to the innocent enjoyment of human life, has joined in a good work, inasmuch as he has diminished the inducement to *vicious* indulgence. God knows there is enough of sin and of sorrow in the world to make sad the heart of every Christian man. No one, I think, need be ashamed of his endeavours to cheer the darker hours of his fellow-travellers' steps through life, or to beguile the hearts of the weary and the heavy-laden, if only for a time, into cheerful and amusing trains of thought."

And again he says:—

"It is not the least of the enjoyments I have had in compiling these pages, to hear of the kind sympathy which they have called forth in other minds, and often in the minds of strangers; and it would be difficult for me to describe the pleasure I have received when told by a friend that this work had cheered him in the hour of depression or of sickness—that even for a few moments it may have beguiled the weight of corroding care and worldly anxiety. I have been desirous of saying a word in favour of old Scottish life; and with some minds, perhaps, the book may have promoted a more kindly feeling towards hearts and heads of bygone days. And certainly I may now truly say that my highest reward—my greatest honour and gratification—would spring from the feeling that it might become a standard volume in Scottish cottage libraries, and that by the firesides of Scotland these pages might become as household words."

Up to his death, in December, 1872, Dean Ramsay was engaged in preparing for this new edition, which has many racy additions, and which must now be the permanent and final form of the work. It is fitly prefaced by a short and well-executed memoir, which tells all that there was to tell in a life that was on the whole uneventful. It is written by Professor Cosmo Innes, who was distantly related to the Ramsay family, and is also a native of Deeside. This memoir—every way pleasant to read, has a certain critical value as showing how Dean Ramsay's early determinations towards anecdote, oddity, and humour were fed by the customs of the district in which he was born and bred, and the circumstances amid which he was afterwards thrown. He was the fourth son of Alexander Burnett, sheriff of Kincardine, and was born in 1793. The sheriff succeeded to his uncle, Sir Alexander Ramsay, who had accepted a baronetcy from Mr. Fox, and with the estates took the name of Ramsay. To the same family belonged the well-known Gilbert Burnett, Bishop of Salisbury, and James Burnett, Lord Monboddo, that clever lawyer who anticipated Darwin so far in his theory of man's descent from the monkey tribe. Edward Ramsay's childhood was spent among the primitive people and customs of Deeside, and the boy was allowed more freedom than might have been deemed advisable for one in his position, to hold converse with peasants and serving people. But like Sir Walter Scott, he profited by it. While still a boy he lived for some years with his grand-uncle, Sir Alexander Ramsay, at Hartley, in Yorkshire, a village which at the beginning of the century was very retired and primitive, according to this account of it:—

"No turnpike road went through the parish. It lay in the line of no thoroughfare. The only inhabitants of education was the clergyman, a man of great simplicity of character, who had never been at the University, and my grand-uncle, of above four score, and a recluse. The people were uneducated to an extent now

* *Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character.* By the late E. B. RAMSAY, LL.D., Dean of Edinburgh. Twenty-second Edition. Enlarged with the Author's Latest Corrections and Additions, and a Memoir of Dean Ramsay, by COSMO INNES. (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas.)

unusual. Nearly all the letters of the village were written by my uncle's gardener, a Scotchman who, having the degree of education usual with his countrymen of the profession, and who, being very good-natured, had abundant occupation for his evenings, and being, moreover, a prudent man and *safe*, became the depository of nine-tenths of the family secrets of the inhabitants."

In the vestry of the parish church the Bible was still chained to the desk as it had been in the reign of Edward VI. The peasants on entering the church still bowed to the altar and to the clergyman. At the funerals some striking customs prevailed.

"The coffin was borne through the village to the churchyard by six or eight bearers of the same age and sex as the deceased. Thus, young maidens in white carried the remains of the girl with whom they had lately sported. Boys took their playfellow and companion to the churchyard. The young married woman was borne by matrons; the men of middle age did the same office for their contemporary."

In this rural district Ramsay laid in his first store of observations from character and customs. The people, though primitive, were not free from violent and vindictive passions. "They might have the simplicity, but not the "virtues of Arcadia." The ecclesiastical livings were small, and the clergy, engaged during the week in agriculture and horse-breeding, were scarcely different from farmers. While studying at Cambridge, Ramsay spent his vacations at London, Bath, or Deeside, and dipped into botany, or cultivated his taste for music. He was an accomplished player on the flute, and had an ardent love for Handel's music. He was ordained in 1866, and officiated for several years as curate of two parishes near Frome, in Somersetshire, the united incomes from which were under 100*l*. He took great delight in the work here, and soon won the kindly regards of the people—even of the Wesleyan Methodists, who were strong, and many of them of the old type. In 1824 he commenced his long career in Edinburgh. In 1844 he was offered the bishopric of New Brunswick, but declined it, and afterwards he refused the bishopric of Glasgow and the coadjutor bishopric of Edinburgh. From his journal we notice how conscientious and laborious he was in all his work—not forgetting his sermons, often rewriting and elaborating them with much patience and care, and recording his conviction that "nothing in the way of public "speaking can be done without a thorough "preparation."

He was very much exercised with the high party feeling that began to rise. "It has a "sad effect on my mind," he writes, "but my "refuge must be in keeping off controversy "and adhering to edifying and practical mat-"ters." But the Romanising tendencies of his own Church distressed him more than he was willing to avow openly. For he knew the Scottish people too well to think that this tendency could have any good effect in recommending her to their suffrages, and he was too much a gentleman and too broad-minded to see without concern the rising of a movement which would cut off his Church more and more completely from association with the other Churches of Scotland, In this he showed himself wiser than most of his *confrères*.

In nothing was his Christian charity and breadth of mind more shown than in the efforts he made in getting up the memorial to Dr. Chalmers, of whom he had been the warm friend and remained the sincere admirer. He brought the matter before his friends, and procured subscriptions from not a few—amongst others from Mr. Gladstone and M. Guizot, who wrote to him characteristic letters on the subject. This is Mr. Gladstone's note:—

"I send you my rather shabby contribution of 10*l*. to the Chalmers Memorial. I wish it were more, but I am rather specially pressed at this time; and I think I refused Robert Bruce altogether not very long ago. He [Chalmers] was one of nature's nobles. It is impossible even to dream that a base or unworthy thought ever found harbour for a moment in his mind."

In the latter part of the letter Mr. Gladstone speaks of "the extraordinary rain of bishoprics" which had fallen upon him. Appointments to the vacant sees occasioned anxiety:—

"Bishop Temple is a fine fellow, and I hope all will now go well. For Manchester (this is secret) I hope to have Mr. Fraser, of Clifton—a very notable man, in the first rank of knowledge and experience on the question of education. Many pressed him for Salisbury. I can truly say that every bishop who has been appointed has been chosen simply as the best man to be had."

The French historian wrote as follows on the Chalmers memorial:—

"I shall join with true and sincere pleasure in the erection of a statue in honour to Dr. Chalmers. There is no theologian or Christian moralist for whom I have a higher esteem. On some of the great questions on which he treats, I do not share his opinions; but I honour and admire the elevation, the vigour of his thought, and the moral beauty of his genius. I pray you reckon me among the men who will be happy to be able to render him a solemn homage, and I thank you for having thought of me in this design."

There are also many letters from Dean Stanley, and other celebrated personages, but as most of these have already gone the round of the newspapers, we do not make further reference to them.

Mr. Innes accounts for the marvellous success of the "Reminiscences" by saying that the anecdotes are not only true to nature, but actually true, and that the author threw into the work much of his enthusiastic love for Scotland and for everything Scotch. But the Dean has carefully guarded himself from the possibility of its being thought that he gathered stories and anecdotes merely for their own sake. He wished in this pleasant way rather to point a moral and to teach. He sought them out and used them only for purposes of illustration. He intended to exhibit phases of life and manners, social customs and habits of thought, now almost extinct, and to present specimens of a dry, humorous originality which he believed to be quite peculiar to the older Scottish characters. As an example of this humour, he quotes a story which the late Mr. Erskine of Linlathen had heard regarding Mrs. Henderson, an old housekeeper at Airth, who felt astonished at the violent emotion exhibited by Mr. Bruce, of Kinnaird, the Abyssinian traveller, on hearing of the execution of Louis XVI., in 1793. "There's Kinnaird," exclaimed this worthy dame, "greeting as if "there was nae a saunt on earth but himsel' "and the King o' France." As Dean Ramsay remarked, this observation is utterly unlike anything that would be said on such an occasion by an English person in the same position in life—as different, in fact, as the wit of Sam Weller is different from the wit of a Scotch ostler.

In Dean Ramsay Scotland lost a true son, who had endeared himself to the whole English-speaking race, and had done much to elevate them above their prejudices, and to unite them in lasting bonds of sympathy and mutual respect. An excellent portrait accompanies the whole, doing justice to the pleasant, placid features which looked forth with such mild benevolence and hopefulness.

Epitome of News.

On Saturday afternoon the Queen, accompanied by Princess Beatrice, paid a visit to the Empress Eugénie, at Camden-place, Chislehurst.

The *Times* has good grounds for announcing that the Duchess of Edinburgh has hopes of an event that would increase her own happiness and that of the duke.

At a meeting of Her Majesty's Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1851, at which the Prince of Wales presided, the commissioners resolved that the series of International Exhibitions should be discontinued after the closing of the present Exhibition in October.

The *Gazette* notifies that Captain Glover has been made a Knight Grand Cross of St. Michael and St. George; Colonel Festing a Knight Commander, and several other officers and civilians lately engaged on the Gold Coast, Companions of the Order.

The new Chelsea Embankment was opened on Saturday by the Duke of Edinburgh, who was accompanied by the duchess. The royal carriage procession entered the Embankment at Battersea Bridge, where it was met by the chairman and members of the Metropolitan Board of Works. An address of welcome having been presented to their royal highnesses, the Duke of Edinburgh replied, and the structure was declared open.

Mr. Arthur W. Peel has resigned the duties of whip to the Opposition in the House of Commons, owing to ill-health, and will be succeeded by the Right Hon. W. P. Adam, who, at the request of the leading members of the Liberal party, has consented to give his services in that capacity.

The London Mansion House Fund for the relief of the famine in Bengal now amounts to more than 100,000*l*.

A supplementary naval estimate for 150,000*l*. for the year 1874-5 has been issued.

The Dean of Westminster has accepted an invitation from the Mayor and Corporation of Bedford to deliver an address on the occasion of unveiling the statue of John Bunyan, at Bedford, on Wednesday, the 10th of June. The statue is of colossal size, in bronze, by Mr. Boehm, and is presented to the town by His Grace the Duke of Bedford.

The Cambridge University Union on Wednesday night adopted a motion, by 101 votes to 42, in favour of introducing the system of cremation into England.

Mr. Edward A. Foley, brother of the well-known sculptor, committed suicide on Sunday morning by throwing himself into the Regent's Canal, near the Zoological Gardens. Mr. Foley, whose residence and studio are at 39, Arlington-street, Mornington-crescent, has been in the habit recently of walking out late at night, and on Saturday night left home home shortly before twelve. About 2 a.m. a young man named Payne, on passing the Albert-road, or, as it is sometimes called, the Westwater Bridge of the Regent's Canal, saw a man sitting in the centre of the iron railing of the bridge, with his legs dangling over the water. Payne had gone but a few yards further when he heard a loud splash in the water, and on turning round saw that the man had disappeared. He raised an alarm, but before Mr. Foley could be got out of the water he was dead. He was identified by his friends later in the morning at the St. Pancras workhouse.

The hot weather appears to have gone to America. A New York telegram says that the temperature there on Sunday was 94 degrees in the shade.

The *Indépendance Belge* states that Bishop Reinkens, the German Old Catholic bishop, had a private audience with the Czar at Stuttgardt.

The Lower House of the Prussian Diet on Saturday passed the third reading of the bill relative to the administration of vacant bishoprics by 257 votes against 95. The House rejected a motion proposed by Herr Windthorst to refer the bill to a committee. The bill supplementing the law on the training and appointment of Catholic priests was also read a third time.

At the coal market on Monday the report that the difficulties in the Durham collieries are still unsettled increased the demand for house coals, which obtained a ready sale at a recovery of 2s. from the rates of Friday. The merchants' price for best Wallsend has been raised to 33s.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the accession of the King of Holland to the throne was celebrated on Monday with great rejoicings. There was a general holiday in Amsterdam, and the Bourse was closed.

A telegram from Wiesbaden states that the German Emperor drives out every day, and in the evening visits the theatre. The Grand Duchess of Baden was expected to arrive to-day.

It is stated from St. Petersburg that the Grand Duke Nicholas, son of the Grand Duke Constantine, has been deprived of the command of the approaching expedition up the Oxus. He has, indeed, been placed under arrest in his own house.

The Durham Colliery strike may happily be considered at an end. The meeting of the miners' delegates yesterday accepted by a majority the proposal of the employers to a 10 per cent. reduction. The colliery engine men desire to submit their disputes to arbitration. It is believed that they will generally follow the miners, and return to work.

The Cleveland ironstone miners have resolved to accept no reduction, and the mineowners are determined to enforce it. Hence the mines will be closed and the blast furnaces, except where there are small stocks of ironstone, will be stopped, and the whole iron trade of the north will be shortly brought to a stand.

The question is under consideration at Darlington of erecting a monument to the late Mr. Joseph Pease, who was the first member of the Society of Friends returned as a Parliamentary representative, was the founder of Middlesbro', and took a warm interest in all philanthropic movements.

EMMANUEL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, CAMBRIDGE.—We are pleased to learn that the new Congregational Church at Cambridge is now completed, and is to be opened on Tuesday next. The opinion which we entertain, and have repeatedly expressed, of the great importance of having a better place of worship at Cambridge, has led us to watch the progress of this movement with great interest. We are gratified to learn from those who have had an opportunity of seeing the building, that it is one which is creditable to the taste of the constituency which has raised it. It is hoped that all who are interested in the spread of Free Church principles, in our university as well as other towns, will assist to clear off the comparatively small sum which remains to be raised.

THE LABOURERS' LOCK-OUT.—The lock-out of agricultural labourers in the eastern counties has now lasted two months, and though a large number of men have been drafted out of the district to other fields of labour, many emigrating to other shores, the total number on the funds of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union in the Exning district is 1,943. The amount paid away in the district during the last week was 809*l*. 17s. 7d. While attempts are being made to devise some means of settling the matter amicably, the area of the lock-out appears to be extending. At Chippenham, in the Newmarket district, a few labourers have given up their union tickets rather than be turned out of their homes. The Newmarket bench of magistrates have granted orders of ejectment against several of the lock-out unionists at the instance of Mr. John Lyles King, of Camois Hall, Wood-Ditton. The secretary of the Lincolnshire League has withdrawn the objectionable rules, and has promised to get them repealed. At a meeting of agricultural labourers held on Saturday at Monkton, between Margate and Canterbury, the names of several farmers were mentioned who had given notices to their labourers to leave the Union or their employment. Mr. Simmons, the leader of the labourers' movement in Kent, stated, however, that the farmers had made no further mention of the matter, and, under his (Mr. Simmons's) advice, the labourers had continued their occupation as though nothing had happened. It is stated that nearly 5,000 labourers left England for New Zealand alone during the month of April. Many of these have gone from Oxfordshire and the adjoining counties.

Births, Marriages, and Deaths.

A uniform charge of One Shilling (prepaid) is made for announcements under this heading, for which postage-stamps will be received. All such announcements must be authenticated by the name and address of the sender.]

MARRIAGE.

ALLIOTT—SMITH.—On May 12, at Union Church, Putney, by the Rev. R. Alliott, B.A., assisted by the Rev. G. H. Brown, of Eccles, Manchester, Walter, youngest son of the late Rev. W. Alliott, of Bedford, to Elizabeth, daughter of the late William Smith, Esq., of Pimlico.

FUNERAL REFORM.

The LONDON NECROPOLIS COMPANY conducts Funerals with simplicity, and with great economy. Prospectus free.—Chief Office, 2, Lancaster-place, Strand, W.C.

Markets.

CORN EXCHANGE, MARK LANE, Monday, May 11.

We had a small supply of English wheat this morning, and the prices obtained were fully equal to the quotations of Monday last. Of foreign wheat arrivals were moderate, and the trade was firm at last week's extreme rates. Flour was without change in value. Peas and beans were fully as dear. Maize was in small supply, and supports previous prices. Barley, of all descriptions, was steady in value. Arrivals of oats have not been large, and prices ruled 3d. to 6d. above the rates of this day week. At the ports of call we have had more arrivals, and prices of wheat and Indian corn have given way 6d. to 1s. during the past week.

METROPOLITAN CATTLE MARKET, Monday, May 11.—The total imports of foreign stock into London last week amounted to 14,663 head. In the corresponding week last year we received 14,672; in 1872, 10,343; in 1871, 18,416; in 1870, 9,888; and in 1869, 17,243 head. A steady tone has prevailed in the cattle trade to-day, but business has not been extensive. A fair supply of home-fed beasts has been on offer, and the general quality has been good. More animation prevailed during the earlier hours, but the demand subsequently slackened. Prices, however, ruled about equal to those of Monday last, the best Scots and crosses selling at 5s. 10d. to 6s. per 8lbs. From Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and Cambridgeshire we received about 1,800; from other parts of England, about 250; and from Scotland, about 80. On the foreign side of the market there has been a fair supply, including about 128 from Gothenburg, 169 from Christiana, 100 from Oporto, 72 from Hamburg, and 224 Dutch. With a quiet trade prices have been unaltered. Large supplies of sheep have been in the pens. The position of the trade remains much the same as on Monday last, sales progressing quietly at that day's quotations. The best Downs and half-breds have sold at 5s. 4d. to 5s. 6d. per 8lbs. Lambs have sold at 7s. 4d. to 8s. 4d. per 8lbs. Prime small calves have been in request at full prices, otherwise the trade has been quiet. Pigs have sold at late rates. At Deptford there have been about 100 beasts on offer.

METROPOLITAN MEAT MARKET, Monday, May 11.—An increased supply of meat was on sale here to-day, and the trade was slow on rather easier terms.

PROVISIONS, Monday, May 11.—The arrivals last week from Ireland were 128 firkins butter, and 2,000 bales bacon, and from foreign ports 32,539 packages butter, 2,675 bales and 639 boxes bacon. The supplies of foreign butter continue good, and a further decline has been submitted to in Normandy and Jersey, but in Friesland little change to notice. In Irish no inquiry, prices being still too high in the Irish markets. The bacon market has ruled low, and prices of Irish declined 2s. per cwt., but no change made in Hamburg.

COVENT GARDEN, Thursday, May 7.—Supply of outdoor produce has not been quite so free during the last few days; prices, however, remain nearly the same. Importations from the continent include cherries from 3s. 6d. to 6s. per box, containing about 14lb.

POTATOES.—BOROUGH AND SPITALFIELDS, Monday, May 11.—The supplies of homegrown potatoes on offer are rather limited, and the trade is steady, and prices are firm. The imports into London last week consisted of 1,581 bags and 145 tons from Antwerp, 369 bags, &c., from Boulogne, 62 boxes from Valencia, 45 tons and 2,243 sacks from Dunkirk, 1,313 bags from Ghent, and 676 boxes from Lisbon. Best Regents, 140s. to 170s. per ton; best Flukes, 140s. to 180s. per ton; Victorias, 140s. to 170s. per ton; Rocks, 100s. to 110s. per ton.

WOOL, Monday, May 11.—There has been no feature of importance in the position of the English wool market. Business has not been extensive, but prices have been steady.

OIL, Monday, May 11.—Linseed oil has been firm at about late rates. Rape has been quiet on former terms. For other oils the demand has been inactive.

TALLOW, Monday, May 11.—P.Y.C. is inactive, at 39s. per cwt. on the spot. Town tallow commands 35s. 9d. per cwt. net cash. Rough fat has declined to 1s. 9½d. per 8lbs.

COAL, Monday, May 11.—The supply of coal was very restricted, in consequence of the Durham colliers not being at work. An advance of 2s. upon Friday's prices was easily obtained. Hettons, 26s.; Hartons, 24s.; Kelloes 24s. 6d. Ships for sale, 29; at sea, 10.

H. WALKER'S NEEDLES (by authority), the "Queen's Own," treble-pointed, with large eyes, easy to thread, and Patent Ridges to open the Cloth, are the best Needles. Packets, 1s., post free, of any dealer.—H. Walker is Patentee of the Penelope Crochets, and Maker of improved Sewing Machines, Fish Hooks, Hooks and Eyes, &c.—Alcester, and 47, Gresham-street, London.

JUDSON'S SIMPLE DYES are exceedingly useful household commodities. The process is simple, and result satisfactory, as applied to woollen and silk articles. Shetland shawls or clouds that have become yellow are good subjects for young beginners in the art of dyeing. A basin of water only required; time, five minutes! Judson's Dyes, 6d. per bottle, eighteen colours, of all Chemists and Stationers.

VALETUDO VISQUE LIBERIS.—"A preparation known as Dr. Ridge's Patent (cooked) Food is excellent for infants and invalids. It will be found a very useful preparation for making custards, puddings, and similar preparations for the nursery and sick room."—Extract from "Cassell's Household Guide." Supplied by most chemists and grocers in 1s. packets and 2s. 6d. tins.—Dr. Ridge and Co., Royal Food Mills, Kingsland, N.

MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS.—Parents valuing their children's safety will avoid soothing medicines containing opium, so frequently fatal to infants, and will use only "Stedman's Teething Powders," which are the safest and best, being free from opium. Prepared by a surgeon (not a chemist) formerly attached to a children's hospital, whose name, "Stedman," has but one "e" in it. Trade mark, a Gum Lancet. Refuse all others. Also Materfamilias Pills, a tasteless and efficient substitute for Castor Oil. Price 2s. 3d. per box. Depôt—East-road, Hoxton, London, N.

HOLLOWAY'S PILLS.—In cases of chronic indigestion, disordered liver, and general debility, these Pills are wonderfully effective. They, indeed, have so general and powerful an effect on the whole system, that they clear away or ward off most of the ills that flesh is heir to. They cleanse the bowels, purify the blood, correct biliousness, give tone to the stomach, excite a healthy appetite, produce sound sleep, and impart increased energy to both mind and body. The admirable properties of these far-famed Pills are too highly appreciated to require lengthened encomium here, as they are resorted to by rich and poor of every nation. The cures they effect are not temporary or imperfect, but are seen in a marvellous and most beneficial change throughout the entire body, which enables it with renovated powers to resist the approach of future attacks.

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"I visited" *writes* Dr. HASSALL, "*Messrs. Horniman's* Warehouse, and took samples of Tea ready for consignment to their AGENTS, & on analysis I found them PURE, & of *superior quality*."

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Approved by the Academy of Medicine at Paris and other Medical Authorities in England and Abroad.

The identity of nerve force with electric force being no conjecture, but a positive scientific fact, those suffering from nervous exhaustion and its consequent evils can certainly find no safer and better restorative than Galvanic Electricity, which is Nature's sole remedy for those distressing ailments arising from mental strain and physical excesses.

It is equally certain that the chief merit of Pulvermacher's Patent Galvanic Appliances is that they have by their marvellous simplicity rendered this natural agent accessible to all, and from improvements which have been quite recently made in these appliances by the Inventor, their self-application has become extremely comfortable and pleasing to the patient.

Time, health, and money would have been saved by many, and thousands would have escaped the "trap advertisements" of disguised quack doctors and their extortions had they only known in time the above facts, and availed themselves of this invaluable remedy before having recourse to nauseous drugs or sham electric and quasi-magnetic contrivances, which are invariably put forward with the intent to trade on the reputation of Pulvermacher's Patent Galvano-Electric Appliances, which, having stood the test of thirty years, and of the genuineness of which ample proof can be given.

Public credulity having been so often imposed upon in the advertisement columns of the daily Press, which are open to all, irrespective of merit, Mr. Pulvermacher, in contradistinction to those unprincipled advertisers who publish statements *solely on their own authority*, will henceforth abstain from putting forward any sayings of his own, and quote only the competent opinions of undoubted medical and scientific authorities in favour of his Medico-Galvanic Appliances, and challenges the strictest investigation of his documents and testimonials, both medical and private, which are published in his Pamphlet, "Galvanism, Nature's Chief Restorer of Impaired Vital Energy," sent post free for three stamps, on application to J. L. PULVERMACHER, 194, Regent-street, London, W.

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SUCCESSIVE IMPROVEMENTS have led to the following TESTIMONIAL signed collectively by the *élite* of the Medical Profession in the Metropolis, such as Sir C. LOCOCK, Bart., M.D., F.R.C.S.; Sir HENRY HOLLAND, Bart., M.D., F.R.C.S., and F.R.S.; Sir J. R. MARTIN, Bart., C.B., F.R.C.S., F.S.A., and F.R.S.; Sir W. FERGUSSON, Bart., M.D., F.R.S., F.R.C.S.; &c., &c., &c.:—

"We, the undersigned, have much pleasure in testifying that J. L. Pulvermacher's recent improvements in his Voltaic Batteries and Galvanic Appliances for Medical Purposes are of great importance to Scientific Medicine, and that he is entitled to the consideration and support of every one disposed to further the advancement of real and useful progress."

THE LANCET, No. 1, Vol. II., 1856:

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DR. JOHN KING, M.D., Professor of Obstetrics, &c., &c., in Cincinnati, 1867, in his standard work, page 76, states:

"These chains are very useful in many nervous disorders; Muscular debility, Hemiplegia; Paralysis of children; Central or Cerebral paralysis; Spinal paralysis; Neuralgia; Sciatia; Stiff joints; Œdema of the limbs; Hysteria; Hysterical paralysis; Aphonia Epilepsy; Torpid Liver; Asthma; Amenorrhœa; Dysmenorrhœa; Spinal irritation; Nervous debility; Constipation; Deafness not due to actual disease or structural change; Rheumatism; Dyspepsia; Paralysis of the bladder; Chorea; Impotency; Writers' cramp; Hysterical cramps and contractions; Loss of smell; Loss of taste, &c."

ANOTHER SELECTION OF PRIVATE GENUINE TESTIMONIALS OF RECENT DATE.

GALVANISM v. GOUT.

"Chepstow, Monmouthshire, March 11, 1874.

"Dear Sir,—I am very sorry I have not written before to tell you that the belt I had of you last June has quite cured me. I only wore it six weeks, according to directions, and I can assure you I can walk as well as ever I could. It was a severe attack of gout in my feet and legs. I had not walked about for four years, not without suffering a great deal of pain. How good it seems to be able to walk about again, and in such comfort, too! I have recommended your Belts to many since.—I am, dear Sir, your obedient and thankful servant,

"R. B. FOWLER.

"J. L. Pulvermacher, Esq."

GALVANISM v. NEURALGIA.

"Market Drayton, March 17, 1874.

"Dear Sir,—I consider it is only right that you should know the benefit which I have derived from wearing your Galvanic Chains. I had them last September for neuralgia in the head and spine; previously, as I told you when I wrote, I had consulted several medical men, and had every advice. I am now in my usual health, able to walk and return to my duties with pleasure; in fact, I am leading an active life again.—I am, yours truly,

"M. P.

"Mr. J. L. Pulvermacher."

N.B.—Mr. PULVERMACHER will be happy, in all cases where at the foot of the testimonials only initials and partial addresses appear, in accordance with the wishes of patients, to furnish such information as will show the genuineness of these testimonials, in contradistinction to the fictitious ones so largely circulated by advertising adventurers.

PULVERMACHER'S PAMPHLET of MEDICAL and SCIENTIFIC EXTRACTS, and a selection of the private testimonials, together with price list, as embodied in pamphlet, "GALVANISM, NATURE'S CHIEF RESTORER of IMPAIRED VITAL ENERGY," sent post free on application to

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THE PEACE SOCIETY.

CHANGE OF PLACE OF MEETING.

The FIFTY-EIGHTH PUBLIC ANNIVERSARY of the Peace Society will be held in WEIGH-HOUSE CHAPEL, Fish-street Hill, on TUESDAY EVENING, May 19th.

The Chair will be taken by HENRY PEASE, Esq., at Half-past Six o'clock.

The meeting will be addressed by the Rev. Robert Moffat, D.D.; Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Bart., M.P.; J. W. Pease, Esq., M.P.; Mr. Alderman Carter, M.P.; P. Pennington, Esq., M.P.; Henry Richard, Esq., M.P.; Alfred Illingworth, Esq.; Mr. G. Savage (from the Workman's Peace Association); the Rev. T. G. Horton, and other gentlemen.

CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIAN WORKERS.

The THIRD QUARTERLY MEETING will be held in the EDINBORO' CASTLE, RHODESWELL-ROAD, LIMEHOUSE, on SATURDAY, May 30, at Three o'clock. Subject: "Hints on Directness in Preaching Christ."

Chairman, Mr. S. A. BLACKWOOD.

Admission by Tickets, on application to Capt. the Hon. R. Moreton, Conference Hall, Mildmay Park, N.

ABORIGINES' PROTECTION SOCIETY.

The THIRTY-SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING will be held at the LONDON TAVERN, on WEDNESDAY, May 20, 1874.

Sir T. FOWELL BUXTON, Bart., will take the Chair at Half-past Seven o'clock.

Speeches will be delivered by the Bishop of Saskatchewan; Mr. Alderman McArthur, M.P.; Mr. Edward Jenkins, M.P.; Mr. C. H. Hopwood, Q.C., M.P.; Mr. Alexander McArthur, M.P.; R. N. Fowler, Esq., and other gentlemen.

Admission Free.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

A PUBLIC MEETING of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society will be held in CANNON-STREET HOTEL on THURSDAY EVENING, May 21, at 7 o'clock.

Sir BARTLE FRERE, G.C.S.I., K.C.B., &c., &c., in the chair.

Benj. Scott, Esq., F.R.A.S., Chamberlain of the City of London; the Rev. J. Kennedy, A.M., D.D., of Stepney Meeting; Dr. G. W. Leitner, Principal of the Government College at Lahore; Jamshed, an escaped Siah Posh Kafir slave from Afghanistan; Capt. G. Palmer, R.N., formerly in command of the "Rosario"; E. Jenkins, Esq., M.P.; Rev. Horace Waller, formerly companion of Dr. Livingstone, and other gentlemen will address the Meeting.

Tickets of admission can be had at the Office of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 27, New Broad-street; Mr. Elliot Stock, Bookseller, 62, Paternoster-row; at the London Mission House, Blomfield-street; the Office of the Evangelical Alliance, 7, Adam-street; Mr. E. Marsh, the Friend's Institute, 12, Bishopgate-street-without; Mr. G. Kirkham, at Conference Hall, Mildmay-park, and Mr. R. Gladding, Bookseller, 76, Whitechapel-road.

GREAT MALVERN.

PROPOSED NEW CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

Hitherto the Congregationalists have been prevented building a suitable place of worship in this important health resort by stringent restrictions upon the manorial and adjacent land. At length, by the opening up for building purposes of an estate exempt from such restrictions, a freehold site has been secured in a prominent position in the centre of the town. The Committee now earnestly solicit liberal help from the Christian public to enable them to build a Congregational Church. This enterprise has the sanction of the Congregational Building Society, and is cordially recommended by the following ministers:—Revs. P. C. Turner, late of Malvern; R. Vaughan Pryce, LL.B., Worcester; J. P. Allen, M.A., Gloucester; R. W. Dale, M.A., Birmingham; G. B. Johnson, Edgbaston; A. Morton Brown, LL.D., Cheltenham; and J. G. Rogers, B.A., London, Chairman of the Congregational Union.

£4,800 will be required, of which £1,870 are already promised, including the following contributions:—

Miss Selfe Page, Malvern	£500
Hugh Mason, Esq., Manchester	100
T. R. Hill, Esq., M.P., Worcester	500
W. H. Avery, Esq., Birmingham	100
Sir Titus Salt, Halifax	50

Contributions will be thankfully received by the Rev. Anthony C. Gill, North Malvern; Mr. Joseph Jones, Orchard Lodge, Malvern, Treasurer; or at the Worcester Old Bank, Malvern Branch.

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SUPPLEMENT TO THE NONCONFORMIST.

VOL. XXXV.—NEW SERIES, No. 1486. LONDON: WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 1874. GRATIS.

"NONCONFORMITY AS A SPIRITUAL FORCE."

The inaugural address of the Rev. J. G. ROGERS, B.A., of Clapham, as Chairman of the Congregational Union for the current year, was delivered at the meeting of delegates held yesterday at Westminster Chapel. His topic was, "Nonconformity as a Spiritual Force, in the Past and the Present." This subject was, said the speaker, almost forced into notice by the expected opening of the Congregational Memorial Hall; and though that event was delayed, there were some features in the present condition of Nonconformity which made the review of its position and work not altogether out of place. The apparent change in public sentiment during the last two years had been made the most of, and they were assured that the nation did not admire Nonconformists, who had been demolished in argument, outvoted in the House of Commons, and extinguished at the polling-booth. The work of Nonconformity was done; such good as it was capable of accomplishing had already been secured; any further development of its principles would be simply mischievous; and nothing remained for it now but to gather its robe around it, and die with as much dignity as might be possible under such circumstances. Happily for themselves, Nonconformists were not conscious of such a desperate state of things, and had too long contended with the stern blasts of adversity to be moved by the triumphant attitude of their adversaries. Mr. Rogers, before dealing directly with his prescribed topic, paid a glowing tribute to the memory of Thomas Binney, one of the ablest champions and most honoured and trusted leaders of Nonconformity; a name cherished in tens of thousands of hearts in the Congregational Churches and out of them, whose primacy was not less recognised because it had no formal name or sign. It would be long indeed before they forgot that majestic form, so rarely absent from their assemblies, or lost the noble impulses communicated by that unmitred patriarch of Congregationalism. In contrast with the views held by Mr. Binney, the speaker referred to the verdict of their latest critic, Matthew Arnold, who said of olden Nonconformity, "that in temper and contentiousness it began; by temper and contentiousness it perished." How often did scruples of conscience they did not share seem to belong to the infinitely little:—

> But it is the royal prerogative of conscience that it must itself determine what is great and what is little in that sphere of personal action over which its rule extends; and he who attempts to decide it for another shows only that he has in him the spirit of a bigot and a persecutor. Most of the great struggles for the vindication of human right have been waged about points which, regarded from the heights of philosophic wisdom, appear marvellously unimportant. The offering of a pinch of incense to an idol, the bowing down to some image which it pleased authority to set up, an act of prostration before the host, the making of the sign of the cross in baptism, the wearing of the surplice,—what very trifling things do they seem to inspire the zeal of the confessor or call forth the self-sacrifice of the martyr. But the decision as to their importance rests solely with those from whom compliance is demanded. If they err, they at least are the sufferers, while the world gains by the example of every man who prefers a living conscience to wealth, or power, or even life. "We thank God," says Archdeacon Hare, in a more noble spirit, "that He has given such grace to weak, frail, human hearts, that the meek and humble may, when strengthened by His Spirit, not be driven out of the path in which their conscience commands them to walk, by the leagued forces of King, and Parliament, and Convocation, by the severest penal enactments, or even by the bitter pang of having to leave their beloved flocks."

No words could better express the feelings of Nonconformists towards their fathers. Indeed, our work is easy compared with theirs. They were the forlorn hope of the army of freedom in its assault on the fortress of intolerance, and their noble work was a stimulus and inspiration. But claiming to be their successors did not mean that all their views should be accepted, and the desire to link modern Dissent on to the old Nonconformity was not to be interpreted as giving an undue influence to the past. This was their peril. The past had been converted by the world into an idol:—

> The priests of this idolatry are numerous and powerful; they are to be found in every Church and party; they mingle in every circle; they interfere with every sphere of human thought and activity. There is not a new truth which they have not misrepresented, reviled, opposed. There has not been any great movement for the emancipation or enlightenment of the world which has not had to run the gauntlet of their contemptuous scorn, their pitiless hate, their cruel persecution. They have done their best to convert the Bible into a fetish, the Church of Christ into the instrument of an iron despotism, and religion into a piece of formalism. The innumerable mistakes of their class, who have so continually treated the servants of God as the emissaries of Satan, have not taught them to distrust their own judgment or to lower their pretensions; and the thinker of today, who dares to question some of their established maxims, and to serve God after the "way which they call heresy," will have to face the same opprobrium which the prophet of the olden times had to encounter before him. They have their creeds to which men must conform their thoughts; their musty precedents, by which they claim to rule the boundless energies of living souls; their venerable forms, by which they stifle the power of truth and godliness. The light may shine in on their darkness, but they are so blinded by prejudice and tradition, that they comprehend it not. Sweet gales from heaven may be blowing round them, but they mistake them for blasts from hell, their very freshness and purity being the evidence of their unhealthiness. We are unworthy descendants of Puritans and Nonconformists, if even our reverence for them should induce us to become slaves of the past, and so render ourselves unfit for the work of the present. The very images which we place in our halls, of ancestors who by their own strong hands snapped the chains of a spiritual tyranny, would reproach us for our degeneracy were we to weave out of their words and deeds new fetters with which to bind our own souls. We could not if we would, we would not if we could, efface the memory of their teaching; but we would find in it a stimulus, not an anodyne; an inspiration; not an oppression; a voice that summons to still grander achievements, not one that sternly forbids further advance. With all our boast of freedom, the past, like some evil magician, has too often cast his enchantments even on us; benumbing and paralysing our faculties; holding us "cabined, cribbed, and confined" on the Procrustean bed of authority; dwarfing our spiritual stature, and unfitting us for those grander enterprises which the enthusiasm of a true love should impel us to undertake. We want some mighty deliverer who shall break the spell. God, by innumerable indications, is beckoning onward the heirs of that glorious light and liberty He has prepared for His children; but the force of routine and habit, of creeds and forms, of human interpretations of God's truth which have taken the place of that truth itself, of ideas deemed orthodox because they are old, and institutions esteemed Divine because they are established, hold them in Egyptian bondage. We want another Moses to brave the power and wrath of another Pharaoh, one who with prophet-voice shall challenge the sway of ancient superstitions and prejudices, and, in tones that constrain obedience, bid them let God's people go.

Still it might be said that the utter failure of the Act of Uniformity vindicated the wisdom of their fathers. It had failed to gather the piety of the nation into one Church, and had become, as the *Spectator* said, "a more or less accidental conglomerate of a good many different churches." The Primate himself had also told of the spurious Romanism introduced into certain parishes, and of its bold defiance of the rulers both in Church and State; of altar cards for the special use of clergymen, on which were unauthorised prayers and invocations to the Virgin and the twelve apostles, to be said in an undertone, while those ordained by law were publicly recited; of confessional boxes, and a multitude of other illegal novelties, either in the way of ornament or of acts of worship. The archbishop might have gone further, and confessed that an honest endeavour to put down this rebellion would be a death-blow to the institution which it attempted to purify. Probably either Evangelicals or Ritualists would be willing to give the authority demanded by the bishop, but for the fear that it might be used against themselves. It has come to this—

> The Establishment exists because a liberty far wider than that for which Nonconformists asked has been usurped by parties too powerful to coerce into obedience. Instead of preserving the grandeur and unity of one of its own noble cathedrals, the Establishment has undergone such alterations as those which have transformed St. Giles's, in Edinburgh, so that, by the judicious use of lath and plaster, it is made to afford shelter to three separate congregations under one roof. In short, the law, having accomplished the object of expelling the Puritans, and being still available to keep out all of too scrupulous consciences, or who will not believe in the predominance of episcopacy, is set aside in favour of the wildest Rationalism on the one hand, and a caricature of Romanism on the other, which is often more extravagant and unreasonable than the original. To crown the whole, the proposal for composing the intestine divisions by which it is torn, which seems to be most acceptable, is one which will establish Congregationalism within an Episcopal Establishment, leaving the clergyman at liberty to preach what doctrine he please, provided the congregations have the right of determining the ritual. Could the proof of utter failure be more complete? The Act is not repealed, but it remains only to point the contrast between what the Church was meant to be and what it is.

In proportion to the success of the Act of Uniformity had been the decay of spiritual life and power in the Church. When Nonconformists were silenced there were on all sides lamentations over the spiritual desolation: or, as Archdeacon Hare said, "A century of coldness and dreariness and barrenness; of Arminianism and Pelagianism, of Arianism and latent Socinianism—all of which were compatible with ordained uniformity." The time of refreshing and revival within the Church was the fruit of action without the Church. John Wesley and his friends who began it were driven into exile. Since then the old policy has been reversed, and the object has been to embrace as many as possible within the pale of the Church. But there are practical Nonconformists in its bosom, some "Catholic," some "Protestant," and the Establishment exists because its first condition is violated. The cry is still for room, for air, for light, for liberty. This was a sign of vigour. They must be free, though as yet they were not willing to accept the one condition on which alone that freedom could be honestly enjoyed. Probably the Free Churches of England had done something to foster the spiritual earnestness which existed in the Establishment, and had set at naught the Act of 1662. They could rejoice in it, for they did not hope that the entire Church would adopt their policy, and they longed to see the Church of Christ in the enjoyment of that perfect freedom which was essential to her triumph, and welcomed all indication of a longing for freedom in the Established Church. But Nonconformists had done a work of their own according to the testimony of the *Edinburgh Review* and the Rev. F. W. Myers, though Mr. Matthew Arnold might not admit it.

> The Church of England can point to a perfect galaxy of holy men who have been her devoted members, possibly more than are to be found in the records of our Dissenting Churches, but that does not prove the superiority of her "public" system; still less does it show that the free Churches have not done as much for the promotion of piety in the land; least of all that their system, as a system, tried under equal circumstances, would not show greater capacity for meeting the wants of a nation than that of a State-Church, especially if it was one fashioned after the ideal of the Act of Uniformity. If indeed we are to appeal to our own history on this point, we have the broad fact that two centuries of work have elevated the free Churches—which, at the commencement of the period, were proscribed and persecuted, not even allowed to erect sanctuaries, or to hold assemblies for worship—into a position approaching equality with that of the Church which long was the only Church permitted to exist, and which during the whole time has been dominant. There is hardly a fact like it in history; but from the eagerness of the champions of the Establishment to show that as yet the majority has not inclined against them; to shake the force of statistics by nibbling criticism, which may assign themselves an additional thousand, and proportionately reduce the strength of their rivals; and, above all, to take credit for the vast mass of irreligion, which is the opprobrium of their system, it is clear its true significance is not yet appreciated. For my part, I should be quite content to accept their own figures, especially when I remember that the Episcopal Church would have appeared infinitely worse in the comparison, but for heavenly gales bringing the breath of life and health, which have swept across her, and stirred her sons to deeds of holy zeal and self-sacrificing devotion. It is to living souls, whether found in church or chapel, and not to the formal mechanism of State arrangements, that the Christian work in this our nation is mainly due.

The success of the Free Churches was mainly due to the spontaneity and freedom of their action, though its primary cause might be the faithful preaching of the Gospel. While Erastianism sought to degrade the Church by making it a department of the State, the Free Churches had fostered and developed the higher motives which are the main source of spiritual life. They had no power but soul-power, for the force of a cold intellectual conviction would not long endure the stress of sacrifice and toil necessary even to preserve them in being, in the absence of the constraining influence of Christian love. The clergyman was sent into his parish by authority, and it was not necessary that a Divine passion for saving souls should have sent him there, though there were holy and zealous clergymen. The State took as little cognisance of the fervour of the Evangelical as of the sacerdotal claims of the Catholic. But the Free Churches must grow or they would die. It was simply impossible that they could maintain their ground without spiritual life, and the more real, vigorous, and abundant that life, the greater their power. It was the glory of the Free Churches that by refusing to submit conscience to the rule of the State, and by trusting only in the weapons of a spiritual warfare, they had been made God's instruments in pulling down the strongholds of sin, approving themselves as His ministers. That spiritual force was abundantly necessary in the times in which they lived.

Fifty years ago Samuel Taylor Coleridge, one of the profoundest thinkers, penned these pregnant and prophetic words: "Romanism and despotic government in the larger part of Christendom, and the prevalence of Epicurean principles in the remainder—these do indeed lie heavy on my heart." When Coleridge wrote there was not the faintest sign of those movements which have given such a remarkable character to our age. The new Anglican school, with its priestly assumptions and mediæval tendencies; its bitter hate of the Reforma-

tion, and desire to undo its work; its sighings after Catholic unity, and willing to sacrifice all for which our martyrs bled in order to attain it, was as yet a thing of the future. The Papacy was then at the nadir of its fortunes, so meek and humiliated indeed, that it was supposed to be in a state of senile decay; and the common idea was, that the power which had for centuries been the deadly foe of human freedom, had so far exhausted itself, that it could never again be the object of dread except to fanatical spirits. The seer which had then foretold that in the same century which would see an intellectual development without parallel in history, a strong wave of reaction would sweep over Europe, and that the Anglican Church would help materially to swell its volume and increase its force, alike by the new ideas she would tolerate within her own borders, and the recruits she would contribute to the army and the Papacy, would have been treated as another Cassandra, whose prophecies of evil were evidences only of a distempered brain. The universal belief among those who plumed themselves on their wisdom was that the days of superstition and priest-craft belonged to the past, and that the fear of their return was purely chimerical. The grave and serious words of the philosopher would seem to indicate that he was not insensible to the danger which was still lurking underneath such fair appearances, but even he could hardly have anticipated the seriousness of the crisis in the midst of which we find ourselves, and with whose reactionary tendencies we are called to grapple.

Then Epicureanism and Scepticism seemed far more imminent than that rampant Ultramontanism which is the apotheosis of superstition, though both are equally foes of spiritual Christianity. Was there anything in the principles of the Free Churches which qualified them for contending against these adversaries to the simplicity of the Gospel? The dogma of infallibility invested the Church with the power of declaring that reason and observation and conscience were all wrong. Yet what they pronounced a lie was nevertheless a certain and indisputable truth. This was important to bear in mind, for the essence of both Romanism and Ritualism was in the assertion of Church authority. Neither of them involved a question of mere ceremony, and both attempted to override the freedom of the individual conscience, and the authority of God's Word, by the assumed supremacy of the Church. Thus authority against liberty—the Church against the individual conscience—had become the battle of the age, and it was curious that the new champion of infallibility was an Englishman (Archbishop Manning) who would have men free that they might do the will of the priest, and who would identify Christianity with Ultramontanism, and every form of Protestantism with unbelief. His tactics were masterly. He had fascinated even true Protestants, and calculated that the world would rather accept Ultramontanism than abandon Christianity. Given the necessity of a Church as a numerical unit, and it was difficult to refute his arguments:—

The "Old Catholics" represent the latest and most moderate form of opposition, and recognising the difficulty of the struggle they have to maintain, and the elements of promise for future advance which we find in their proceedings, we could wish they had a position of greater logical strength. But what possible hope can there be for those who recognise the authority of the Church, speaking in her councils, when they challenge the self-same authority when transferred to the Pope? The battle between the Old Catholics and the Curia is to them of supreme importance, and as a stage of development it has its value; but, after all, it touches only the surface of a great controversy. There is the much deeper question as to the existence of any "Catholic" authority over the consciences of men, and though the greater liberality of those who are themselves in a state of revolt against the Church to which they have hitherto belonged, would lead them to look more considerately upon what they regard as the lawlessness of an extreme Protestantism, though there may even be a sympathy with it much stronger than they are willing to confess even to themselves, yet their theory binds them to condemn it as strongly as would the Ultramontanes.

With equal, if not greater strength, does the same criticism apply to the position of the Anglicans. The syllabus may be more offensive than the Athanasian Creed, but so far as authority is concerned, it is not clear how a distinction can be drawn between them. Both are documents of the Church, owing such weight as they possess entirely to the will of the "Holy Catholic Church"; and if her right to decree the one be admitted, how is it possible to object, with any consistency or success, to her action, when she proceeds to formulate the other? It may be said, with what degree of truth it is happily not necessary for me to examine, that the one approves itself to the reason in a way which the other does not; but to argue thus is to cut away the common foundation on which both rest, and to recognise that right of private judgment which the upholders of both equally deny. Or it may be said that the Council of the Vatican only represents a portion of Catholic Christendom, and a portion which, on the modest showing of Anglicans, is in schism, because it is not in agreement with them, in a condition hardly if at all better than Nonconformists. But here again comes in the same obnoxious liberty (obnoxious and objectionable too when exercised by other people), exercised by the younger and less numerous Church, to prove the more venerable and powerful one in schism and error. Is it possible that such a claim will receive the slightest consideration, or that any outside their own borders will believe in the pretensions of men who use all the sacred pleas of liberty to sanction their revolt, and then cast them aside when they have served their purpose, and when they in their turn desire to assert their own authority in opposition to others who, following their example, have dissented from them as they dissented from the older Church? Rome surely may well afford to smile at such inconsistency. Her astute statesmen know well that they are absolute masters of the situation, when dealing with those who accept the authority of earlier councils and repudiate that of later ones; who admit the teaching of tradition up to the point at which it diverges from their line of orthodoxy, and then set it aside as worthless; who preserve the idea of a Holy Catholic Church, and yet expect to overturn the power of an organisation the most compact and powerful that the world has ever known, and resting its pretensions on a logic so complete that its first principles carry all the rest in favour of a modern creation—a Church of yesterday, which can justify its existence only by that very liberty which she refuses to all beside.

But Erastianism had little chance against Rome, for it did not appeal to the religious emotions, and could only satisfy a small class of religious *dilettanti*; for Rome spoke with some power when it opposed itself to Cæsarism. But the Free Churches could meet the foe with advantage by an assertion of the most absolute and unqualified form of liberty—the liberty that is not only of one church to dissent from those which had gone before it—of the Protestants to rebel against the claims of Rome, or of the Nonconformists to separate themselves from a National Church—but of every man to search out his own creed, irrespective of what any body under heaven, however venerable, or numerous, or pious, might have determined. But they might be told that they had an absolute standard—the Bible. Yes, but why? Because it approved itself to their own heart and conscience as the word of the living God. But how were those to be met who declared that the truth did not manifest itself to them in the Scriptures? This might be met by another question—What advantage would accrue if we could find some means by which authority could enforce it upon them?

There is a strange idea abroad—a superstition we might rather call it—that the mere acceptance of a creed will profit a man, even though that acceptance be the most purely outward act, in which neither intellect nor heart has any place. But this really is to attribute a magical influence to a simple profession of belief. The creed which profits a man is not that which he holds, but that which holds him, which has taken possession of his intellect and conscience, which inspires his affections and moulds his character; and as no exercise of authority can secure this, so far as true spiritual result is concerned, it avails nothing. That a man's heart should be so out of sympathy with the Gospel, is to us a sad and melancholy fact; but until that sympathy is awakened, it matters not what authority he acknowledges, or what profession he makes, Christ is of no effect to him. The truth of the Gospel is not at all impaired by his inability to perceive it, but no authority can make it truth to him until it become that which he himself troweth. It is here indeed that an error is sometimes committed. The statement that there is a verifying faculty in man himself, and that only can be true to him which will meet its tests, is mistaken for an assertion that truth itself changes according to the constitution of different minds, the objective being thus confounded with the subjective. But this is to misunderstand the position. The foundation of God standeth sure, whether men will recognise it or not; but if a man resolve to build upon some other, to his own Master he stands or falls. The day will declare his work, of what sort it is: all that we assert is that it is not for us to anticipate its verdicts, still less to expect that we can reverse them by forcing a man now to declare that to be rock which in his inmost heart he believes to be sand, and on which, therefore, he does not build at all.

What they really needed was more faith in the Word of God itself—a faith which would regard with indifference all kinds of adventitious aid and support; and, above all, would brave the most searching scrutiny, and accept every principle that proved itself a truth, however contrary it might be to preconceived notions, and however menacing in some of its apparent consequences:—

That kind of attachment to the Bible which resolves to hold fast, not only by the old text, but even by the English version; which will retain in the text passages which are proved to be interpolations, and in the version expressions shown to be falsely translated; which glories in the rigidity of its Conservatism, even though it should lead men to accept as the Word of God things which are only human additions or misrepresentations of the Divine original, is an infinitely greater danger than even the scepticism which would overthrow the Book altogether. That wondrous Book, which would never have enjoyed the benefits of human prescription and authority if it had not first established its own claim to be Divine, has lost nothing of its pristine glory and force, and will still maintain its right, if only its friends will show the reality and strength of their trust in it. Critics and scholars may, as the result of their labours, modify our views about the earthly vessel in which the heavenly treasure is contained; but they do not touch the precious jewel that is there enshrined. Our mode of thinking about it may be different from that of our fathers, but our faith in it is not feebler, nor our estimate of its value reduced, and we can look forward to coming generations, with all the changes in thought and expression which are sure to come, and cherish the same confidence for the days to come. Our own experience may recall many modifications in our own thinking, but they have not affected our faith in it.

With that Book alone, and the message of Christ in it, they need not fear to meet the power of Rome. Add to it traditions, Church decrees, human creeds, in the hope of supplementing its power, and they would find that they had introduced only an element of weakness, and insured their own defeat. Such was the basis of their opposition to a Church Establishment. It was in their judgment an infringement of the essential principle of Protestantism, an interference of authority with the liberty of the individual, an intrusion of the State into a region which lay outside its proper domain. Theirs was not a selfish and sectarian policy, as was implied by the idea that they were simply seeking the redress of grievances. Congregationalists might not *yet* so reap good from upholding the principle, but this was no struggle between Episcopacy and Congregationalism, but between authority and freedom; and Congregationalists might claim that always they had been the champions of both civil and religious liberty, and that their principles brought them into sympathy with every oppressed and suffering class—down, he hoped, to the agricultural labourers of England—and the supporters of political, economical, and social reform. They had been the firm allies of the Liberal party. Though Protestants of the Protestants, they contended for the liberties of Roman Catholics as earnestly as for their own; and they thus acted for liberty's sake, for righteousness' sake, for truth's sake, and *therefore* for Christ's sake. They might well then ask to be credited with sincerity, at least when they asserted that it was not selfish sentiment which inspired them in their conflict against sectarian ascendancy. They were but seeking to carry out their own principles in that region where, of all others, they were most needed, and ought to reign supreme where the glory of their Master was concerned as well as their own privileges. The speaker then referred to the subject of possible danger from Romanism, which he thought serious—the danger coming from the Establishment, not only in the manifest tendencies of its own members, but also in that recognition of the principle of authority in religion which its very existence involved.

We have no fear of the result of the conflict which is impending, if only Protestantism be true to itself; that is, if it be perfectly free, and meet the power of the priesthood only by the Word of God, and the force of that love and devotion which that Word awakens in the hearts of men. Living churches inspired by God, and strong in faith and liberty, will vanquish even a priesthood as mighty and as well organised as that of Rome; but a Church owing its position to a law of the State, and shaping its action in accordance with the will of the State, never will. It has sold its birthright for a mess of pottage: it has shorn itself of its strength, and when the hour of trial comes, will learn what a miserable substitute is all the dignity and authority the State can give for the force of spiritual earnestness and life.

Congregationalists were free, without a binding formulary, for that "Declaration" which still figured in their Year Book (from which, as its presence there was misleading, it might as well be omitted) bound no one. They had no subscription and no test; and yet he ventured to say there was no body of ministers among whom there was more essential unity. They might well then let liberty have its perfect work among them. If there were changes desirable in their modes of action, let them not hesitate to make them. If they saw how improvements might be made in their forms of worship, or methods of administration, let them introduce them. And if—what was more difficult perhaps to admit—their theology has been undergoing a silent revolution; if they saw that certain things had been supposed to belong to the essence of the Gospel which they had learned were at best but secondary questions; if they felt that some of their modes of statement, and even some of their opinions, needed modification; let them be free and bold enough to follow truth openly wherever it might lead. Mr. Rogers concluded his address in the following terms:—

To Cæsarism and Ultramontanism alike let us oppose the sacred rights of those whom God has called to the glorious liberty of His children. If we are required to subject our souls to Cæsar, we can but answer in the spirit of our native land: "If Cæsar can hide the sun from us with a blanket, or put the moon in his pocket, we will pay him tribute for light; else, sir, no more tribute pray you now." It is the light from heaven that shines on us; God has given it to us, and we will not ask from human power the right to walk in it. If the priest demands that we believe as the Church teaches, we will answer still: "We are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free; and as Christ has made us free we will not be entangled again in the yoke of bondage." Ours is a precious heritage, and it should be ours to guard it, not only for ourselves, but for all men, as fearful of invading the rights of others as we are jealous of our own.

But if we are freemen, we are the freemen of Christ, and we find our highest liberty in seeking to do His will and promote the advance of His Gospel. Our attachment to the truth is not the less sincere and fervid because we have no desire to coerce others into its belief; because the only weapons we would employ for the promotion of Christ's kingdom are faithful words and holy lives; because the foundation of our faith is not the authority of man but the witness of our own conscience that He is the Christ of God, that He is the Saviour of the world; because the Gospel we preach was not received from man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ to our own souls. Abjuring the use of unlawful instruments, there is the higher obligation resting on us to employ the power which God gives and means us to use for him. We have to deal with a generation which, we are tauntingly assured, has begun to doubt whether Christianity is more than a name.

And we have to labour for the removal of doubt. Is it wonderful that a scepticism so fatal to all Christian work should be wide-spread when Christianity and its symbols are turned into party cries and watch-words, when such value is attached to the mere profession of zeal for the truth, where, alas! there is too abundant evidence that they are nothing more than form, hollow and unmeaning at best, possibly false and hypocritical; when orthodoxy is so often disjoined from morality, a high profession from a godly life, piety from righteousness? Is it wonderful when consciences are so placed on the rack of casuistical sophistry, and tortured and accommodated to meet the requirements of law, that the moral sense of plain men is shocked by the ingenious interpretations of the simplest phrases? Is it wonderful when Statecraft has so blunted the spiritual sense that even those who profess concern for the interests of religion can throw a cloak over the practice which, of all others, is the darkest blot on a national

Establishment, by suggesting that "in the abstract there is no more sin in buying yourself the cure of souls, if that is your true vocation, than in buying yourself a farm or a newspaper!" Is it wonderful, when a Church boastfully proclaimed the bulwark of Protestantism, serves as a reservoir into which are collected those waves of superstition, which from time to time sweep over Europe, and from it are distributed throughout the land; when Anglican and Evangelical subscribe the same creeds, and yet each impeaches the other as a teacher of deadly error; when Christian men glorify a system of the most rigid prescription because of its freedom and comprehensiveness; when, in short, the world is practically taught that in ecclesiastical matters things are not what they seem, words mean not what they say, that uniformity is variety, and restriction liberty; that positive declarations are charitable hopes, and that language teaches absolute Romanism or extreme Protestantism, according to the interpretation put upon it by the reader. The effect produced by these and similar phenomena is seen in the terrible words of one of our most powerful writers—"There are states of moral death no less amazing than physical resurrection, and a Church which permits its clergy to preach what they refuse to obey, is perhaps more truly miraculous in impotence than it would be miraculous in power, if it could move the fatal rocks of California to the pole, and plant the sycamore and the vine between the ridges of the sea."

Have we laid ourselves open in any degree to such a reproach? God forbid that we should dare, in the spirit of self-righteousness, to talk as though we were free from sin, and had done nothing to foster this feeling. Unreality is a sin that lies very near all of us, and there is nothing perhaps which more damages our influence. Let us strive in everything to be true men, to have the courage of our convictions, so to live as to make the world feel that what we say, that we believe. But for this, the first condition is, that we not only preach the Gospel, but live the Gospel, and by the manifestation of godliness put to silence the gainsaying of ungodly men.

"Christ in us," guiding our thoughts, ruling our will, inspiring our purposes, revealing Himself again to the world in our holy lives, will be the mightiest power with which to meet both unbelief and superstition. O blessed Lord, Thy promise is that Thou wilt always be with Thy Church. Be for us, be with us, be in us, O Christ. Thou who art the Truth, make us faithful! We want to know nothing among men but Thee! Save us from all weakness and cowardice in confessing Thee! Purge our hearts of the leaven of sectarianism and bigotry, increase our faith, make our love to glow with new fervour, help us to do Thy will, and so manifest Thine image in us that the world may glorify Thee in us.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN SCHOOL SOCIETY.

The sixty-ninth annual meeting of the British and Foreign School Society was held at the Borough-road College last Monday. The chair was occupied by the president, Earl Russell, who was supported by Earl Fortescue, Earl Chichester, Lord Aberdare, Sir T. Fowell Buxton, Mr. W. E. Forster, M.P., Mr. J. C. Stevenson, M.P., Mr. Pease, M.P., Mr. Hussey Vivian, M.P., the Dean of Westminster, the Revs. L. Cappell, D.D., P. Colborne, G. Eldridge, Septimus Hansard, G. M. Murphy, T. Newton, T. B. Stephenson, W. Tozer, P. J. Turquand, W. Tyler, J. Viney, and J. De Kewer Williams, &c., &c.

Among the letters expressing the regret of the writers at their inability to attend, was one from Mr. John Bright as follows:—

40, Clarges-street, April 24, 1874.

Dear Sir,—I cannot come to your approaching meeting, for I feel constrained still to avoid all public meetings which do not come within the line of my special duty.

You speak of the principles of your society and of their more general acceptance. In my opinion they are the principles upon which our public common school education should have been based. You avoid what is strictly denominational religious teaching, but you give as much of religious teaching as can be useful to children, and as much as they can understand. I think the bulk of the opinion in England, as in Scotland and Ireland, is in favour of some religious instruction in schools, and it is to be deeply regretted that the moderation and simplicity of your system should not be accepted by all Christian churches and sects. The general feeling might thus be consulted, and no supremacy would have been established, for supremacy can only lead to mischief in the department of education, and in its opposition to the moderation and charity which should always accompany Christian effort.

The time may come, though I can scarcely hope to live to see it, when there will be less grasping for power on the part of the professed ministers of Christ, and greater willingness to make concessions in the interests of multitudes suffering from the heritage of generations of ignorance and neglect.

I am, very truly yours,
JOHN BRIGHT.

Alfred Bourne, Esq., Borough-road, London.

Mr. ALFRED BOURNE, the secretary, read an abstract of the sixty-ninth general report, in which the committee, after referring to the plan pursued by the society as catholic, simple, practical, wise, and deeply religious, paid a tribute to some of its deceased supporters, including the Rev. T. Binney, and stated that the training of teachers was the chief and absorbing work of the society at the present time. Of 641 applications for teachers the committee had been able to provide in some way or other for 320. One hundred and seventy-five trained and certificated teachers had been sent out from the four colleges (at Borough-road, Stockwell, Darlington, and Swansea) at Christmas last, where there is accommodation for 360 resident students, and where 359 are at present in training. The position taken by the students when they leave, and the results of the Government examinations, were referred to, as showing the character of the instruction given. At the certificate examination there were 351 successes and one failure. In science there were 723 passes, several have passed in more than one of the sciences studied, viz., mathematics, mechanics, chemistry, animal physiology, physical geography, botany, and acoustics, light and heat. In drawing there were 475 passes. The earnest attention of the committee had been directed to an effort to render permanent the training colleges at Darlington and Swansea, by building in the one case, and purchasing the premises in the other. The elementary schools of the society, with eight certificated teachers, two assistant and seventeen pupil teachers, and more than 1400 scholars of all ages from three to sixteen, had been carried on vigorously, chiefly as a means of giving the students of the colleges practical training in the art of teaching. Details of the agency work of the year, and extracts from the agents' reports, were given with the special object of showing how the religious difficulty had been overcome in British schools. The deficit of the last and the two previous years amounted to over 2,000*l.*, and it being necessary to take some immediate steps in reference to the branch colleges (at present conducted in hired premises), and desirable to make some additions to the colleges in London, an appeal was made for 21,000*l.*, of which about 6,000*l.* had been given or promised.

The Right Hon. W. E. FORSTER, in moving the adoption of the report, said that the position he occupied in connection with the late Government was the sole cause of his not attending the recent meetings of the society. He ascribed the rapidity and ease with which he carried the Education Bill through the Commons to the education which the country had received from Earl Russell and the other pioneers of popular education. He did not suppose that his lordship would agree to all that had been done, but he was sure he would sympathise with the motives by which the Government had been actuated. It was a matter for congratulation that the country had at last acknowledged the duty of seeing that there should be an efficient school within reach of every child in the kingdom; and also that the principles of religious, unsectarian education advocated by this society were so extensively adopted by the school boards of the country. He quite agreed with Mr. Bright that the bulk of the nation was in favour of religious education, and it followed almost as a matter of course that such education should be unsectarian. School boards being elected by constituents of all denominations, wisely concluded that while education should be religious and so please all denominations, it should be unsectarian, and so offend none. He took the meaning of religious, unsectarian education, to be that it remembered the great truths of Christianity upon which all were agreed, and forgot the distinctive tenets upon which they differed, and which even in the opinion of those who held them were of secondary importance. It must not be supposed he had changed his opinion as to the justice and wisdom of the course adopted by the Government in recognising the claims of denominational schools, for the managers of these schools spent on them time, labour, and money which could ill be spared for a long time to come even from the cause of secular instruction. He did not think it possible to drive doctrinal dogmas into the minds of young children, and consequently he was in no wise discouraged at the number of our denominational schools. He had carefully distinguished between "secularism" and "unsectarianism." There was an immense difference between them, and the way in which those who advocated unsectarian education had been supposed to advocate secular education was one of the most extraordinary instances of confusion to be found in modern politics. If secularists would no longer call themselves unsectarian, it would be a step towards the solution of the educational difficulties of the day.

The Rev. SEPTIMUS HANSARD seconded the motion.

Earl RUSSELL, in putting the resolution to the meeting, said they had to consider what their fathers meant when they established the society. They were deeply impressed with the necessity of education, and believed that all education should be founded upon religion. But upon what religion? Why, upon the Christian religion. They then determined to look for the greatest authority upon the Christian religion, and what could that be but the Bible. Hence it was that they decided upon religious unsectarian education, and he himself was convinced that this was the best of all education. He approved of the course adopted by Mr. Forster and the late Government in deciding not to throw aside all that had been done, but rather to supplement what had been done, and complete what was imperfect. He did not think the educational interests of the country would suffer at the hands of the present Ministry, but he looked rather to an improvement of the quality than to an increase of the quantity of the education imparted. He hoped the measures of Parliament would be such as would establish peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety for all generations.

Earl RUSSELL being about to vacate the chair, a vote of thanks to him was, on the motion of Mr. J. GURNEY BARCLAY, seconded by the Dean of WESTMINSTER, carried by acclamation.

Lord ABERDARE then took the chair, and Earl CHICHESTER proposed the officers for the ensuing year. On being seconded by Mr. J. C. STEVENSON, M.P., the motion was carried.

Earl FORTESCUE then moved:—

That this meeting, recognising the importance of reading and teaching the Bible in elementary schools, and believing that this is secured in the plan of the British and Foreign School Society without interference with the rights of conscience, rejoices in the wider adoption of the society's principles and practice throughout the country, and earnestly hopes that the effort which is now being made to extend the operations of the society, and still further increase its influence, may be crowned with success.

His lordship said that the people of England had at the last election declared emphatically in favour of religious unsectarian education. Religious parents did this because they thought that a knowledge of the Scripture was the best preparation for instilling into the minds of their children a knowledge of the tenets of their particular sects, and, as had been just shown by Mr. Hansard, irreligious parents also wished their children to be religiously instructed. Just as it was logically demonstrated that religious unsectarian education was impossible and absurd, came the awkward fact that for the last seventy years the British and Foreign School Society had been imparting this very kind of education.

Sir T. FOWELL BUXTON seconded the motion, which, on being supported by the Rev. W. H. FREEMANTLE, was unanimously carried.

Mr. H. HUSSEY VIVIAN, M.P., then proposed:—

That in the opinion of this meeting, the success of the experimental training colleges for mistresses in the North of England and the Principality fully justifies the attempt to establish these institutions on a permanent basis.

He entirely dissented from the view expressed by Mr. Forster, that the early teaching and doctrinal dogma had no effect on the minds of the children, and cited the Roman Catholic Church in support of his own view.

The Rev. PHILIP COLBORNE seconded the motion, which was then unanimously carried.

Mr. S. KEMP WELCH moved, and the Rev. G. M. MURPHY seconded:—

That the grateful acknowledgments of this meeting be respectfully offered to Her Majesty the Queen for the continuance of the royal patronage and support.

Dr. GLADSTONE moved, and Mr. SOPWITH seconded, a vote of thanks to the chairman, and Lord Aberdare having responded, the meeting separated.

THE METHODIST NEW CONNEXION AND THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.—The following is a copy of a resolution passed at the April quarterly meeting of the Leeds Circuit of the Methodist New Connexion, held in Woodhouse-lane Chapel, Leeds, on Monday, April 20:—"That this meeting, viewing the religious aspect of affairs in the country at the present time, the stealthy strides of Rationalism, and particularly of Ritualism, in the Established Church of England, and the unscrupulous way in which Tractarians are using the prestige and power of the same to bring England again to the feet of the Papacy: having regard likewise to the inevitably evil influence exerted by the Establishment on the social life of the nation, and the injustice done to a large proportion of British Christians by their exclusion from our common burial-grounds; and believing at the same time that our endeared Protestantism would be best secured and the English Church be immensely stronger and richer in the sympathy and love of the people, by the application to her of the Irish precedent, would express its earnest concurrence in the objects of your society, and cordially hopes the speedy dawn of the day when they shall no longer belong to the contingencies of the future, but to the number of accomplished and realised facts.—William Cocker, D.D., Enoch Hall, Ministers; Seth Slater, Edward Tiffany, Stewards."

NONCONFORMIST ASSOCIATION, PORTSMOUTH.—On April 24, about forty gentlemen, representatives from the Dissenting places of worship in the borough of Portsmouth, dined together at Smith's Temperance Hotel. J. Griffin, Esq., presided. The Rev. H. Hitching presented a statement in which was a proposal for the formation of an association with the following aims:—1. To spread a knowledge of the principles of civil and religious liberty as held by Nonconformists. 2. To secure mutual confidence and united action amongst leading Nonconformists. 3. To ensure that in public matters the interests of Nonconformity should be generally represented by members of Nonconformist congregations. 4. To afford facilities for bringing the opinions and influence of Nonconformists to bear on the settlement of important questions of the day. 5. To improve the higher education of the young people in Nonconformist congregations by giving scholarships and exhibitions in aid of their training. A resolution that such an association be formed, was proposed by Mr. Byerley, seconded by Mr. J. S. Blake, supported by Messrs. Brown, Winson, Light, and Horne, and carried unanimously. A second resolution, proposed by the Rev. J. Hunt Cooke, and seconded by the Rev. T. W. Medhurst, appointed a council, and left to those nominated the formation of rules. There was great unanimity of feeling expressed and regret that such an association had not been earlier formed. It is proposed to meet about once a month to receive and discuss a paper prepared by some member of the society, to occasionally obtain lectures from eminent advocates of the cause, and especially to meet for conference when any public question arises that affects Nonconformity.

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